

# Brazil News

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Editorial

## **The Simulator**

Five minutes have passed since the first red light began blinking urgently on the console of a mammoth four engine airliner with every seat taken. As pilot and copilot urgently scan their instruments, the craft shudders violently. More red lights. A prerecorded voice announces: “Fire in engine number three!” The appropriate switches are flipped to cut fuel and activate fire extinguishers. For a few moments it appears that the rapid response of the pilots may have brought the situation under control. Once again the prerecorded voice fills the cockpit: “Fire in engine number four!” The plane bounces wildly. Screaming can be heard from the passenger section.

More switches are thrown, more dials turned. More red lights. More recordings. It is no longer a matter of attempting to reach the closest alternate airport and making an emergency landing, but rather a desperate effort to make a “successful” crash landing—not a cheerful prospect in the Rocky Mountains.

With great skill, the pilots are able to pull the craft out of its mortal dive, avert several mountain peaks and glide to a crumpling halt in a rock-strewn valley.

Survivors? Two. The pilot and the copilot. As they stumble out of the cockpit, they are drenched in sweat, but otherwise uninjured.

A man dressed in a suit and tie steps up to the two pilots, slaps them on the back, and exclaims, “Congratulations, fellows! You did a terrific job!”

The “crash” you just witnessed actually took place in a nondescript box mounted on hydraulic cylinders and attached by cables to a powerful computer. The “Rocky Mountains” may have been the basement or the 27<sup>th</sup> floor of a building in the middle of New York City. The man who congratulated the pilots was also a pilot, and the simulator instructor. He was dead serious when he told them they did a terrific job. He knew that there was no possible way the pilots could have averted a crash under the conditions he dished out to them. Actually, they kept the plane “flying” longer than

he had expected. Yes, the company could afford to give the pilot a raise and give the copilot his fourth bar.

The only thing that was real in this story was the sweat and the washed out feeling of the pilots. So real had the simulation been that as they struggled to save their craft, they forgot they were in a simulator.

If it wasn't for the hundreds of hours that pilots spend in these odd looking boxes on wobbly stilts, travel wouldn't be the pleasure that it is today.

A simulator is "an apparatus that generates test conditions approximating actual or operational conditions" (AHD).

A simulator has three basic functions: It teaches, perfects and tests skills. This is especially true when on-site learning is hazardous, very costly or impossible. The Apollo lunar missions are an excellent case in point.

We all agree that for man to go to the moon and return is a tremendous feat, even though we understand but an infinitesimal part of what is actually involved in such a venture. Just to stir our imagination, we quote Michael Collins, one of the three CAPCOMs\* on the Apollo 8 mission: "[M]y own feelings were more in keeping with those expressed in a speech by Jerry Lederer, NASA's safety chief, three days before the flight. While the flight posed fewer unknowns than had Columbus's voyage, Jerry said, the mission would 'involve risks of great magnitude and probably risks that have not been foreseen. Apollo 8 has 5,600,000 parts and one and one half million systems, subsystems, and assemblies. Even if all functions with 99.9 percent reliability, we could expect fifty-six hundred defects...'"

Yet when systems—or even an entire module—fail, there must be redundancy in the remaining systems or module to pull through the emergency.

Apollo 11 will always be remembered as the flight that took the first terrestrial beings to the moon. Subsequent Apollo flights bring back memories of Rover vehicle excursions and other activities that marked each mission.

Of the seven Apollo missions (11-17) intended to place man on the moon, only six achieved this objective. Due to technical problems, Apollo 13 had to return to earth without even attempting a lunar landing. Yet, far from being a failure, Apollo 13 stands out as the

*\*The spokesmen for Mission Control when speaking with the astronauts, and conversely, for the astronauts when speaking with Mission Control. Without this setup communications between earth and space would be utter confusion, especially in time of emergency. greatest success of all. To bring the wounded craft and its occupants back to earth alive was a much greater achievement and tribute to the space program than placing a man on the moon with all systems functioning.*

On April 11, 1970, Apollo 13 rose from its launch pad en route to the moon. Perched above the three stage Saturn V rocket were three modules, plus, at the very top, an escape tower.

From top to bottom, we have:

The escape tower. Should any of the stages of the Saturn rocket explode during launch, the escape tower would propel the command module away from the ensuing inferno and then lower it to earth with parachutes. If all goes well, at 60 miles altitude it is jettisoned.

The command module. The center of operations weighing 12,500 pounds; the only part of the entire stack that will make the round trip and return to earth.

The service module. This is where liquid oxygen, fuel, and other consumable items needed for the flight are stored; it is where the three chemical power plants, called fuel cells, generated electricity to operate the systems and keep batteries charged.

The lunar module. Once out of earth orbit and on its lunar trajectory, the command module, coupled to the service module, will be detached from the lunar module, backed up, rotated, and then docked to the front of the command module, which will then be detached from the now spent third stage. This module has no generators and must operate strictly on battery power, enough to sustain two men for 45 hours.

The three stage Saturn rocket. During the first two and a half minutes of flight, this behemoth consumes four and a half *million* pounds of propellant and accelerates from zero to nine thousand feet per second. When orbital velocity is reached that speed will be 25,500 feet per second. At a bit over 11 and a half minutes, the Saturn rocket has burned two of its stages, which are cast off as so much junk. When the third stage is fired up several hours later over the middle of the Pacific Ocean, it will propel the astronauts into their lunar trajectory.

We now return to Apollo 13.

The launch was perfect and it appeared there would not be 5,600 defects after all. Then, exactly 55 hours and 55 minutes after launch, nearly 200,000 miles from earth, a loud, dull boom was heard from the service module, attached to the rear of the command module. The master alarm began to sound insistently in the astronaut's headsets. On the console, the warning light labeled MAIN BUS B UNDERVOLT was aglow. This could be *very* serious. Main bus B was one of the three fuel cells that generated power for the hundreds of components that would cease to function without electricity.

Astronaut Haise, the electrical specialist aboard, began setting switches to bypass dead bus B and connect to bus A. Another warning light: MAIN BUS A UNDERVOLT.

Other warning lights were now flickering. Number 2 oxygen tank showed empty and number 1 was down to one third, and dropping. Glancing out of the side window, Commander Lovell received another shock. What he saw was a dense stream of gas swirling around. As Collins put it, "The three men had never seen so many seemingly unrelated malfunctions at once—at their diabolical worst, the simulator instructors had never served up anything like this..."

The gas being vented was liquid oxygen, without which the fuel cells couldn't produce electricity—nor could the astronauts breathe. The explosion in the service module had been serious, much more serious than they had in the beginning suspected. Without oxygen, the third, and only functioning fuel cell, was also shutting down.

The situation was desperate. The spacecraft was 200,000 miles from earth and with

each passing second it was increasing this distance. With all systems working perfectly and with ample fuel, it would have been possible to make a big U-turn in space and reverse directions. But without electricity, the large thrusters in the service module wouldn't fire.

Without power *Odyssey*, as the command module has been christened, was in its death throes. Yes, the batteries were charged, but they had to be saved for communications and other vital functions, should a way of escape be found.

Houston, fully aware of what was taking place, was working feverishly to save the three wayward men headed for outer space. The immediate concern was to shut down all systems, all lights, everything, in the command module and rely on battery power to keep the radio operative. This was done.

When Houston announced their emergency plan, the astronauts had already come up with the same solution: use the lunar module as a life boat. As a self-contained unit, it was equipped with thrusters, fuel, oxygen, electricity stored in batteries, navigational equipment, food, everything needed *to descend to the moon and return to the mother ship*. Since the lunar landing was now out of the picture, why not use these resources to attempt to get back to earth?

The solution is great, but is it as big as the problem? Remember the spacecraft is speeding away from earth, not toward it. The dinky lunar module thrusters could in no way perform the U-turn.

The solution found by Houston certainly wasn't attractive. It meant continuing *toward* the moon, entering its gravitational field, firing the lunar module's thrusters briefly to enter the proper lunar orbit, fly around the moon, and then, emerging on the other side, do another burn that would place the craft in a new trajectory—this time pointed toward earth.

Would it work?

Ah, this article is about simulators, isn't it?

Back in Houston, mountains of data were being fed into high-powered computers, and then made available to simulators. There, on earth, men seated in simulators programmed to replicate the exact situation taking place some 250,000 miles away—with the great advantage that if they "crashed," they learned what to avoid, and thus save three men's lives.

By running the different options through the simulators, Houston was able to come up with a routine, not an easy one, that had a fairly good chance of saving the astronaut's lives.

It wasn't easy. Without power, the craft got colder and colder (something the simulator operators didn't feel). It was becoming increasingly difficult to concentrate. Then Houston came on with good news. Enough power had been saved by shutting down virtually all systems, except for communications, that systems could now be powered up again, in preparation for reentry.

Even this was a mountain. Never before had systems been totally shut down in space. Would it now be possible to bring them back to life? To complicate matters, with

the air conditioning system shut down, the cabin had not only become cold, but also extremely damp. Droplets of water were everywhere. With everything saturated with water, would the instruments work? Would switches and breakers function? Or would there be a hiss, smoke and then fire?

On their simulators, Houston had come up with a procedure to revive the systems that had been shut down. It took two hours to relay all the switch settings and computer keystrokes that would be necessary to power up.

It wasn't until nearing earth and the service module was cast off, that the astronauts got an idea of the extent of the problem in the service module. One side had literally been ripped out by the explosion.

The lunar module was also cast off and the command module made an uneventful return to earth.

We repeat: NASA's greatest triumph wasn't putting man on the moon and bringing him back to earth, but having a spacecraft explode 200,000 miles from earth and then bringing its occupants back safely.

In space, there is no such thing as a truly routine flight. With so many things that can go wrong, some will. Not often will a service module demolish itself. The seriousness of the emergencies that arise during flight are usually directly proportional to the crew's and flight control's ability to deal with them rapidly and effectively. This in turn is directly proportional to the amount of time spent in a simulator.

It's true that not every kind of emergency can possibly be programmed into a computer. As Collins writes, never had simulator instructors created a situation similar to that which occurred on Apollo 13. Yet the hundreds of inglorious hours which the astronauts spent cooped up in simulators hadn't only prepared them to deal with the emergencies which their instructors dished out to them, but—and far more important—to be mentally prepared to deal with any emergency without panicking. During the entire Apollo 13 episode, never once did the astronauts lift their voices with each other, or with Houston.

Astronauts realize that with so much that can go wrong, success isn't absence of emergencies, but rather the ability to deal with emergencies.

The astronauts (at least in their professional life) have learned a secret that eludes many of us. Mentally and spiritually we are unprepared to meet emergencies. We see them as intruders, as harbingers of worse things to come. We panic. We raise our voice. We blame others. All too often our first reaction is to turn tail and run (something which an astronaut can't even consider).

It would be a bit simplistic to say that successful astronauts are made in simulators. Yet it is there that they learn to accept emergencies as an inevitable reality of life that must be dealt with rapidly and efficiently.

We earthbound creatures who don't pilot airliners nor spend time in orbit, will probably never spend time in a simulator.

But...have you ever thought what it would be like to have a personal simulator? A simulator through which you could run your difficult decisions, your emergencies, your options in life?

Husband and wife could squeeze into the simulator together and find the best way to deal with a difficult home problem.

Boards and committees could get together and discuss a sticky situation and after narrowing it down to three or four options, run them through the simulator and come up with the best solution.

Staffs faced with a seemingly insoluble problem could run it through the simulator this way and that. Each time there was a “crash,” they would say, “No, that won’t work.” Maybe after the fifteenth or twentieth try they would hit on the solution.

Even financial options could be run through the simulator: Should or shouldn’t we buy this farm? Should or shouldn’t we move to another location several states away? Would investing in a new tractor or building a new home be the proper thing to do?

The thought of having a personal simulator on which we could prepare for life, like the astronauts prepare for space flight, is enticing. But no such equipment is on the market. What is available—alas, standard equipment in all human beings—is an *imaginator*.

It would be interesting, and possibly distressing, to know how many minutes or hours a day we average trying to prepare for life by running our options and problems through an imaginator.

Contrary to a simulator which depends on accurate facts, the imaginator depends only on our version of a situation, *and how we would like for it to turn out*. So absorbing is an imaginator that we can easily find it more enthralling than real life. Indeed, it is exactly because of the amount of time spent in an imaginator, that there are so many social misfits in today’s world. And in our own society.

To have an imagination is one thing. To spend time in an imaginator is something entirely different. Man was created with an imagination. Imaginators were introduced after the fall.

It’s true that there are no simulators available to prepare us for real life. And why should there be, when something so much better is available? In five different places Jesus is recorded as saying, “Take no thought...” in relation to the future. He wasn’t trying to say we should be happy-go-lucky and act as if tomorrow didn’t exist. Rather we can understand that in order to find our way through life we don’t need a simulator, and much less an imaginator.

The *meditator*. The simulator works with facts as man understands them, the imaginator with facts as man wishes they were. The meditator works with facts as God sees them.

Jesus describes the meditator as a *closet*, which according to the AHD, is “A small private chamber, as for study or prayer.” This closet can be a tractor seat, a car seat, a path in the woods, a night shift in a hospital, a waking moment while lying in bed...

The meditator is made up of three basic elements: God’s Word, the Holy Spirit, an open heart. When all three are present in a *closet*, the meditator is powered up. It’s true that not always will God’s Word be present in the form of a Bible, but always it will be *hid in the heart*.

In the case of a simulator the instructor is man, in the case of the imaginator, it is frequently the flesh. In the case of the meditator, it is always God.

Actual experiences speak much more eloquently for the meditator than anything that can be said here.

You readers can tell of the time a scripture mysteriously attached itself to your heart for no apparent reason. Then a day, a week or a month later an “emergency” arose. And so did the solution.

There are those meetings or sessions in which weighty matters must be decided, but there is no clear direction. Then quietly a brother brings a conviction that immediately illuminates the room.

Where do these solutions come from? They come from brethren who have spent time in their meditator (read as: secret closet). We have said that the seriousness of the emergencies that arise during flight are usually directly proportional to the crew’s and flight control’s ability to deal with them rapidly and effectively. This in turn is directly proportional to the amount of time spent in a simulator.

Similarly, the seriousness of the spiritual emergencies which we face and our ability to deal with them rapidly and effectively *are* directly proportional to the amount of time we have spent in our personal meditator. If you don’t remember anything else you have read in this article, remember this: In Christian life the solutions to most emergencies are found *before* they occur, not *after*. ▲

## Thinking Out Loud

### **Leaders—Yesterday and Today**

Today’s school books are different from those used yesterday. Take a look at the old McGuffey Readers in which “old-timers” got their basic education. Now take a look at the stacks of books that have replaced those venerable Readers. Admittedly in some areas today’s books are superior—geography, for example. Modern curriculums fill the mind with thoughts. The Readers taught students how to think.

No place is this more apparent than in the leaders of yesterday and today.

Not all of yesterday’s leaders were great leaders. In fact, some were quite weak. But even those often were men of sterling character. They had a keen sense of justice coupled to high ideals. Their failure to successfully govern the nation, their state or their city was the simple fact that they were the right man at the wrong place.

These bygone leaders had the ability to write an *original* speech. That’s right. They came up with the idea, did their own research, wrote their own text, and then delivered the speech reading from their own handwriting. An occasional word that was added or deleted was their own idea, not someone else’s.

It was exactly these speeches, written by candle or kerosene light, that yesterday’s students read and often committed to rote as part of their basic education.

Those old Readers would give a lot of today’s high school students a workout. We

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might be surprised at how many college students would frown if a Reader was placed in their hands.

Those old Readers taught children how to think, how to lead.

In terms of raw knowledge, today's leaders are light years ahead of yesterday's. They have at their disposal vast amounts of information, they are surrounded by experts in all pertinent fields, they are able to speak to the entire nation, and much of the world, when the need arises.

Yet they live in constant fear of the reporter that will throw a curved ball and catch them off guard on a delicate subject. A moment's hesitation, an indecisive answer, is all it takes to make the evening news and headlines in the morning paper. So they have studied and perfected the art of saying nothing with great conviction.

Many of the industrialized nations of the world today are governed by men who must rely on others to write their speeches, which are then delivered by looking at the television camera—and the TelePrompTer just above it.

They are men whose “convictions” are formed by polls. They find out where the people want to go and then “lead” (follow?) them in that direction. Gone are the days when teachers could point to public figures as examples to be followed.

The Almighty knew about all this way before we did. He knew that in spite of the present moral decay, there would still be a need for leaders. So today we increasingly see men who know how to lead a nation, but not the people. They know how to maintain a stable economy, but not how to have a stable family life. They strive to establish a lasting peace among nations, but are obviously not at peace with themselves.

It is possible there will occasionally arise a “Mennonite” president, but not likely. We must prepare ourselves for this new reality. For men whose convictions are shaped by the polls and not by a Reader. For men who must rely on others to write their speeches, for fear of saying the politically incorrect thing and setting off an avalanche in their popularity rating.

After the armistice was signed, formally putting an end to World War II, General Eisenhower was repeatedly bedecked for his heroic role in the war. He was told that the grateful British would make him an honorary citizen of the city of London, after which he was to give an address.

General Eisenhower took this seriously. Very seriously. All alone he wrote and rewrote his speech. When finished, he read it to several close friends and asked for suggestions. They had only one: Leave as is. So hard had he worked on this speech that he found he committed it to memory.

Known as “Eisenhower's Guildhall Address,” this address, which was given on June 12, 1945, later prompted his grandson David to write: “In the opinion of those who heard him that morning, his delivery was flawless. Eisenhower stood ramrod-straight, and spoke in clipped, emphatic tones. The words were noble: his gratitude for the honor; the poignancy he felt for so many lives that had been lost; his ties to Kansas and his adopted ties to London; his devotion to the freedom restored and proclaimed in Europe; and the inspiration derived by all American soldiers in Europe from their association with the heroic British as brothers-in-arms....”



Read the following excerpts from Eisenhower's address, and then find yourself a copy and read it from start to finish:

The high sense of distinction I feel in receiving this great honor from the City of London is inescapably mingled with feelings of profound sadness. All of us must always regret that your great country and mine were ever faced with the tragic situation that compelled the appointment of an Allied Commander-in-Chief, the capacity in which I have just been so extravagantly commended.

Humility must always be the portion of any man who receives acclaim earned in blood of his followers and sacrifices of his friends.

Conceivably a commander may have been professionally superior. He may have given everything of his heart and mind to meet the spiritual and physical needs of his comrades. He may have written a chapter that will glow forever in the pages of military history.

Still, even such a man—even if he existed—would sadly face the facts that his honors cannot hide in his memories the crosses marking the resting places of the dead. They cannot soothe the anguish of the widow or the orphan whose husband or father will not return.

The only attitude in which a commander may with satisfaction receive the tributes of his friends is in the humble acknowledgement that no matter how unworthy he may be, his position is the symbol of great human forces that have labored arduously and successfully for a righteous cause. Unless he feels this symbolism and this rightness in what he had tried to do, then he is disregarding of the courage, fortitude, and devotion of the vast multitudes he has been honored to command. If all Allied men and women that have served with me in this war can only know that it is they whom this august body is really honoring today, then indeed I will be content.

The feeling of humility cannot erase of course my great pride in being tendered the Freedom of London. I am not a native of this land. I come from the very heart of America. In the superficial aspects by which we ordinarily recognize family relationships, the town where I was born and the one where I was reared are far separated from this great city. Abilene, Kansas, and Denison, Texas, would together equal in size, possibly one five-hundredth of a part of great London...

No man alone could have brought about this result. Had I possessed the military skill of a Marlborough, the wisdom of Solomon, the understanding of Lincoln, I still would have been helpless without the loyalty, vision, and generosity of thousands upon thousands of British and Americans...

My most cherished hope is that after Japan joins the the Nazis in utter defeat, neither my country nor yours need ever again summon its sons and daughters from their peaceful pursuits to face the tragedies of battle. But—a fact important for both of us to remember—neither London nor Abilene, sisters under the skin, will sell her birthright for physical safety, her liberty for mere existence.

No petty differences in the world of trade, traditions, or national pride should ever

blind us to our identities in price values.

If we keep our eyes on this guidepost, then no difficulties along our path of mutual cooperation can ever be insurmountable. Moreover, when this truth has permeated to the remotest hamlet and heart of all peoples, then indeed may we beat our swords into plowshares and all nations can enjoy the fruitfulness of the earth. ▲

## Moçambique

*[The following article, translated from the third page of the Diário de Moçambique daily paper, tells of how the Phil Penner family from South Dakota, missionaries in Moçambique, were held up in their own home and robbed. It's apparent that Moçambican reporters have learned the art of spicing up their articles with "facts" of their own. In the translation, I have tried to transmit the style used in the original.]*

### **Gang of Armed Men Burglarize the Residence of a Couple of American Pastors**

**Two of the elements of the group wore uniforms identical to those of the PRM**  
[Republic of Mozambique Police]

A gang of no-goods brandishing a pistol, two of which wore uniforms identical to those used by the Republic of Mozambique Police (PRM), burglarized a residence where a couple of pastors of North American nationality from the Church of God in Christ Mennonite live, in the Francisco Manyanga section of the capital city of Tete. This case can be considered strange because of the time and circumstances under which the burglary took place.

It all happened around 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, at a time when there was a lot of activity on the street in front of that residence, when the four robbers showed up at the front gate, where the house guard was stationed. They simply tied him up, together with the guard from a neighboring house, so that no one would find out about what they were up to.

According to what Pastor Phillip Penner, the robbery victim, told the "Diário de Moçambique," after tying up the guards, they shoved them into the back yard and then rang the doorbell. "When I answered the door, the only thing the men did was show me a document saying they were PIC agents and that their mission was to search the house and capture us. When I reached for the document, they attacked me, and tied me up and mistreated me, taking us to the kitchen, where they demanded we give them everything they wanted," he said.

Penner added that they also tied up his wife when she came on the scene, not knowing what was going on.

"It was in the kitchen that the no-goods began to make their demands, threatening to kill us if we didn't give them what they wanted," he said. Included in their demands, according to Penner, were money, clothes, a vehicle, among other things, and should they refuse, they would take one of their children with them.

"Because I preferred that they take anything they wanted, rather than one of my

children, and because they demanded that I show them where I kept my money, I had to show them where the money was, and they took all there was, including six suitcases of clothes, a fan, televisions, videos, among other things,” according to Phillip Penner.

Those no-goods, according to the pastor, also demanded the keys and documents to his vehicle, which he immediately agreed to do. So, beside money, the rogues took clothes and a Toyota Hilux car, license plate number MBF-76-33, white, among other things.

Penner added that to take the car, they asked for information concerning the alarm system, which they received, after which they placed all the stolen goods in the vehicle and made their getaway, leaving the owners of the house tied up and without any way to get around.

Only around 11 o'clock, after the rogues had left, the guards managed to loose themselves and the couple, when they notified the police.

Phillip Penner says that this is the first time something like this has happened to him in this country since he arrived last December. He mentions that there have been some small incidents in which rogues have taken objects of little value.

At the same time the police, according to the provincial commander, Adelino Andissene Silveira, says that his corporation is aware of what took place and investigations are underway to apprehend those responsible.

The rogues showed a false document to the owner of the house, which said, “These four agents are empowered to search and capture an individual of the white race, who resides in the Francisco Manyanga section of town, to undergo questioning by the Commander of the PIC.” This document is signed by an official who is identified as Carlos Fopenze. We are trying to find out if the document is authentic, as well as the agent who signed it, to which Adelino Silveira says these are things that are being investigated. ▲

## **An Open Letter to the Phil Penner Family**

Dear Missionaries,

I mentioned last month in a letter to my cousin that India and Mozambique are a special challenge, unaware of what you had already gone through.

Doubtlessly this was a traumatic experience for you. Even we who live thousands of miles from Tete feel an acute discomfort as we try and put ourselves into your place. It doesn't seem right that someone who would leave home and loved ones should be exposed to such additional stress, above the normal difficulties of adapting to a new culture, language and climate.

Even as my feelings are aroused and I search for appropriate words for such a situation, in the background I hear the apostle Paul intoning:

*Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*

*Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;*

*In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in*

*perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;*

*In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

*Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*

Then I look up and on the shelf in front of me, on the far wall, I see the *Martyrs Mirror*, the venerated volume that covers the first fifteen hundred years of Christendom...

Now I hear another voice, the voice of Thieleman J. Van Braght. He is speaking with his assistant, whom we'll call Henry.

"Henry! Do you remember the other day, as we looked into the seventeen hundreds, the eighteen hundreds, the nineteen hundreds, and then finally into the year 2000? I said to you, 'It appears that God's people have come to the conclusion that they have been immunized against persecution, that that is a scourge they will no longer face.' Do you remember my saying that?"

"Look here. We've got a case out in Africa, in Mozambique. A missionary couple was manhandled and robbed..."

Van Braght's voice trails off. Henry looks at him questioningly. The minutes tick by and finally his assistant asks, "What is it? What do you see?"

Hesitantly Van Braght begins speaking, "I see...I'm not looking at Mozambique anymore...I'm looking at the church in N America and other places. I am seeing the reaction that the brethren are having to what just happened..."

Once again the compiler of the *Martyrs Mirror* lapses into silence. Minutes later he continues. "Henry, if we were to come up with some sort of a Richter scale to measure the intensity of each case of persecution, this one in Mozambique wouldn't rate very high. Yes, I know that anytime someone's life is in danger, that is very serious, but history judges each case by its outcome..."

"Henry, what do you suppose the reaction of the brethren back home would have been if the Penners would have been imprisoned, tortured and finally put to death? And their children placed in pagan homes?"

"Worse things than what happened in Mozambique may yet take place. Are they prepared for this? Do they still have the vision that anything that is done against the brethren is first done against the Savior? I don't know Henry. Maybe God lets some things happen to remind them that no vaccine against persecution has been developed. Maybe He sees they are losing their thankfulness for the many uneventful years that go by."

"Henry, I don't understand it all. I just hope, and pray, that they don't get to the place where they think it strange concerning the fiery trial which could yet try them, as though some strange thing happened unto them..."

Phil & Marilyn, courage. Those who are praying for you are far more than those who wish you evil.



## Life in Brazil

### Changes

What has changed in Brazil in the last 30 years?

**Service.** Some time ago I wrote about the very poor customer service at all levels in Brazil. This is a paradox, as Latins are by nature a very friendly, outgoing people. Why then does getting them behind a counter turn them into sullen, inefficient people?

The answer is actually quite simple. Their work isn't valued. To face the public eight to ten hours a day and at the end of the month take home less than a hundred dollars doesn't create incentive. There is no point in asking for a raise, because there are a dozen others just waiting to step in, and the boss knows this. So the idea is to give the boss what he is paying for.

This has changed tremendously, especially in the last several years. With inflation down to a one-digit figure, the buying power of the lower and middle classes has taken a real jump. Restrictions on foreign companies setting up shop here have virtually disappeared, which has shattered a lot of monopolies. All this translates into the magic word of capitalism: competition.

No longer are stores doing customers a favor by selling them their product. Now customers do stores the favor of buying from them—instead of from the competition down the street. And so, good service has suddenly become very important, which makes good workers very important, which makes paying them a decent wage very important.

Not only do we notice this difference locally, but when doing business on the phone. The voice at the other end of the line sounds entirely different from what it used to.

**Goods.** Not only do we get better service in our stores, but the variety and quality of goods that can be bought has increased dramatically. Just a few years ago a microwave oven cost in the neighborhood of four or five hundred dollars. Today a good microwave can be purchased for a little over a hundred dollars.

Obviously we still don't have the variety that you have in N America, nor do we have the sales where they practically give things away, but we've come a long, long ways.

**Vehicles.** When we moved to Rio Verde, there were very few vehicles, most of which were VW bugs and busses, Jeeps, DKWs (a really weird vehicle imported from Argentina, if I'm not mistaken), and a few other models. Four-door sedans simply didn't exist. Nor did air conditioning and automatic transmissions.

Today most of the new cars are four-door models, many come with air conditioning, and automatic transmissions are seeping in.

In Goiânia, as well in any other large city, there are a host of car agencies that sell imports. While the price of our cars, especially of imports, still is higher than in N America, the gap is slowly closing. At least it's no longer necessary to run around in a VW bug or a Jeep.

When speaking of vehicles, the good news is that the price of used cars has come down to where more and more people are driving cars, even if they are 15 years old.

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

**Telephones.** When we moved to Rio Verde, phone service was strictly local. After a number of years it reached Goiânia, then all of Brazil, and finally we got international service.

But there was a catch to all this. Most people didn't own a phone because to tap into the phone system cost around two thousand US dollars. After ordering a phone, it could easily take two years or more before it was installed. To own a phone was a status symbol.

Today to acquire a phone costs less than 50 US dollars and is usually installed in less than a month. But that's only half of the story. The real revolution is the explosion of cell phones. Once a status symbol, it will soon be a sign of poverty to *not* own one. This is possible because of a little twist that we have in our cellular system here. We pay only calls we make. Anyone calling to a cell phone must pay for the call. Added to this is the possibility of buying a card which entitles the user to x amount of minutes of air time. It's expensive air time, but someone on this system will obviously keep things to a minimum, but since they can receive calls for free, it puts them into contact with the rest of the world.

At present there are very few homes here on the Colony that don't have a phone.

Much of Brazil has gone digital, so we have excellent service.

**Banks.** I doubt if anyone on the Colony has ever felt a twinge of lonesomeness for banks the way they used to be. A visit to the bank, especially on Monday or Friday, could easily become a Via Dolorosa, which began the moment one entered the bank.

There might be 10 or 15 tellers at work and there might be 10 or 15, or more, people in each line. This meant choosing a line, which was no easy matter. We must remember that during the period that inflation was rampant, tremendous amounts of (almost worthless) money were handled. As a result it wasn't unusual for someone to come to the bank with an attaché case crammed with bills—all of which had to be counted. Or maybe the money would come in a large bundle wrapped with brown paper. Due to the volume of the money, and the possibility of making a mistake, it usually had to be counted twice, which could take 30 minutes or more. So the first precaution to take upon entering the bank was to scan the lines for attaché cases and suspicious looking paper bundles, and avoid those lines.

Even that had its pitfalls. I remember the time I was behind a portly fellow who got to the window and began pulling packages of money out of all his pockets, after which he unbuttoned his shirt and began pulling packet after packet of money he had stashed away all around his waist. It's one of the quickest ways I know of to lose weight.

Brazil's banking system today is without a doubt one of the most modern in the world. The major banks have a network of agencies spread over all of Brazil. That means that those of us who have an account in Rio Verde can travel most anywhere we want to and still do our banking as though we were in our local agency—without speaking to a soul. We do it all on their electronic tellers. This is also true in our local agencies, where—at least I—do 98% of my banking electronically.

## This & That

The Literature Center has been in a real turmoil for the last three weeks. Carlos Ambrósio (who wrote the article in BN 107) did some remodeling and his brother Genésio repainted the interior and the eaves on the outside. Once the mess is all cleaned up, it's going to look like new. Sort of.

Ike & Rosalie Loewen spent several weeks in Brazil. They came in and left through Curitiba, where their children, Mervin & Norma Jean Loewen, are stationed. We always hate to see them leave.

Ben & Laura Koehn had a little girl on April 12, Leticia Deanne.

Dave & Marta Kramer from the Boa Esperança Colony had a little girl, Tamara, on April 18.

Chris & Anita Stoltzfus had a boy, Donovan Ross, on April 24.

(That's what farmers call an above average yield—a bumper crop, if you will.)

The Congregations had their Annual Meeting reports.

Bert & Ada Coblentz have done their annual migration to the US.

Christ & Edna Stoltzfus are spending several weeks in Brazil with their children.

Jason and Ricky Holdeman from Georgia are visiting their relatives here—and I suppose a lot of non-relatives too.

April 24 was Amy Stoltzfus' bridal shower. She's going to get married. She is Elias & Colleen Stoltzfus' daughter. She is going to marry Delton Holdeman. He is Daniel & Linda Holdeman's son. She is Christ & Edna Stoltzfus' granddaughter. She is Richard & Edith Mininger's granddaughter too. He is Duane & Frances Holdeman's grandson. He is also Frances Schultz's grandson. So there.

What about the Perdigão poultry and hog project? The industrial complex is nearing completion. The hog projects are coming quite well. But they have run into a real problem with their chicken operation. The bank is financing 70 percent of the chicken barns and the farmers are supposed to come up with the balance. It happens, however, that anyone with that much money doesn't need to mess around with chicken manure. So either they convince the bank to come up with a better deal, or they're "up the crick." They have promised that on the Colony the financing will be 100 percent, but it may take a few months until things really start happening. Start thinking in terms of a being part of a BN Tour group this coming January. Call Pat Baize at 605 546 0244.