

Brazil News



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Editorial

The Furniture Makers

A house without furniture to us isn't a house. The thought of moving into and living in an unfurnished house is something we don't even consider.

This makes sense. Culturally and anatomically we Westerners do not adapt well to sitting, eating and sleeping on the floor. We need furniture.

In pre-modern times, before particle board and veneer made their appearance, furniture—at least for the common folks—was meant to furnish, not to garnish. It took a sturdy table and benches to raise a family of twelve or fifteen children, plus accommodate frequent visitors. (Imagine trying to raise that kind of a family with a drop leaf table and padded high back chairs.)

Yesterday's furniture was somewhat crude by today's standards. Yet when we remember that tables, benches, bedsteads, chests, were made without the help of power saws, planers, sanders, routers, we must grudgingly admit that the artisanship possibly exceeded that of today, where a one thirty-second of an inch difference can send a piece of lumber to the scrap.

We don't know how long the trade of the furniture maker has existed. We do know that it has for at least two thousand years, because of the record we have of a carpenter who started a business back then.

For any business venture to succeed, it must meet a consumer need. Timing is crucial. Put a product on the market before it is time and the effort will collapse. Wait too long and the buyer will have settled for something else, possibly even an inferior product.

When the carpenter opened his business, people had little or no furniture in their houses. Sitting and sleeping on the floor caused them to be perpetually tired. So when the carpenter began asking people if they were tired, they would stop and think a bit, and then say, "Come to think of it, yes, I am tired. Very tired."

The carpenter would smile at them and say, “Then you need to try the furniture I build. I’m sure you would feel better.”

So a few people acquired his products and discovered that everything the carpenter said was true. Word spread and soon he was flooded with orders.

We mention here that the carpenter didn’t actually have a carpenter shop. He was an itinerant carpenter, that is, he carried his tools with him and set up “shop” wherever he found prospective buyers. (Interestingly, in his own village, where he had a real shop, the town folks refused to buy his furniture.)

Swamped with business, the carpenter took on twelve apprentices. They accompanied him in his travels and began picking up the trade. Then another seventy were added.

These were men of varied temperaments, backgrounds and cultures. Some were fishermen, there was a doctor, a tax collector, and who knows how many other professions represented—now all carpenters. This heterogeneous group, with the help of different women, made up the initial work force of the new furniture factory.

The carpenter faced a formidable task. He knew he would have but three years to get his business organized and operating. Consequently he spent a great deal of time holding class. Fortunately, several of his workers had the presence of mind to record the basic guidelines by which his business would operate.

When after three years the carpenter turned the business over to his associates, as he had told them he would, their first reaction was of incredulity. He also told them before leaving that after he was gone business would actually pick up, and that he would continue to run the business through a direct communications hookup.

The day that business resumed, it became apparent that the new setup would function. And very well. Over three thousand new customers bought furniture. Another day five thousand sets of furniture were sold.

Contrary to other businesses that patent their goods and then build factories that will take care of the demand, the carpenter insisted that all his customers receive an authentic copy of the blueprint to the furniture they purchased, together with detailed instructions, so that they could build and sell to others exact replicas of the products which they had acquired.

It was truly amazing how men and women of all walks of life became accomplished carpenters. In fact, when people would see the furniture they produced, they would make comments like, “You sure can tell where they picked up the trade.”

All businesses have growing pains, and this one was no exception. There were those who were death—literally—on those producing this new furniture. One of these, one of the most energetic opponents, was paid an exceptional visit by the carpenter. The result was that he turned in his deputy’s badge and became a furniture builder too. Not only did he travel extensively, building and selling furniture everywhere he went, but he made some important additions to the instruction manual already in use, explaining how to deal with problems in the manufacturing and selling of furniture. He wrote extensively on how that all furniture makers should work as a guild, and not as autonomous carpenters, each doing their own thing.

Also he made it plain that all furniture should be built according to the same specifications. The blueprint used by carpenters should always be a true copy, made directly from the original—never a copy of a copy. And much less a copy of a copy of a copy....

He wrote extensively on the importance of the carpenter's guild and the need of unity amongst the workers everywhere so that the high standards of quality would always be maintained.

The first years were marked by intense activity. Business boomed. And so did problems. The charter members of the carpenter's guild traveled from place to place building furniture. Sales were usually so good that they would have to stay on and organize local guilds for the many new carpenters. Foremen were elected to keep the work going smoothly.

If this furniture was such a success, why the determined effort by some to destroy not only the product, but the producer as well?

The answer is...well, I suppose we could call it competition. We have said that people were always tired, and that the reason they were tired was that without proper furniture in their houses they couldn't rest properly. It happens that there were those, the competitors, who were cashing in their tiredness, offering them all kinds of quack remedies, which included the practice of a host of vices. Every time someone bought some of the carpenter's furniture, they lost a customer.

And that's not even half of the story. Every time they lost a customer, they acquired an outspoken opponent of their quackery. Their first reaction was to try and smash the furniture, but they found it was unsmashable. The only thing left to do was to get rid of the owner, but even that backfired. It seemed the moment the owner was eliminated, there was a queue of people waiting to pick up the furniture left behind. No one would go away empty handed, because local carpenters, seeing the buyers, would quickly make more furniture and make it available.

The thing that identified the men and women from the carpenter's guild was the quality of their furniture. It was literally built to last a lifetime. Forgers, expert wood workers, with access to all the prints and manuals, found it impossible to duplicate the furniture built by the guild.

True, some were able to come up with a product that *looked* identical to the original. But it was fake. Pick up a piece of this furniture and it was either too heavy or too light. Douse it with water several days in a row and it would warp out of shape. Get it too close to the fire and it would show signs of cracking. Place something heavy on it and it would collapse. No, there was a world of difference between the original and the counterfeit.

The furniture produced was never of better quality than the worker that built it. It was for this reason that members of the guild always kept an eye on each other's work. At the first sign of a flaw, they would have a talk with the artisan. It was useless to try to repair the flawed furniture. Only the builder himself could do so—by repairing himself.

No one ever expected that there would never be any flawed furniture. Humans, after all, are humans. The manual used by the guild gave detailed instructions on how to deal with individual problems.

Much more serious were the problems that involved the local guilds. The manual gives the example of seven guilds, five of which were producing substandard furniture.

The foremen of course had an enormous responsibility in the area of quality control. In fact, it was possible to get an X-ray view of the foremen in any given local guild, without ever laying eyes on them, by looking at the furniture produced in that area.

We can't possibly give the history of the carpenter's guild over the last two thousand years in these few pages, so we will merely overfly the area and occasionally dip down to see what is happening.

During approximately the first three hundred years artisans from the carpenter's guild were systematically harassed, and not uncommonly eliminated, by those who saw the furniture produced as a menace to their own businesses.

After this, during a short period of relative calm, something happened that would have a profound influence on the furniture industry. There arose within the guild a segment dissatisfied with the furniture being produced. They felt the traditional table, benches or chairs, and beds were inadequate, so they began adding other pieces of furniture, for which there was no blueprint, for which they made their own. But they didn't give copies to their workers. Only to the foremen.

Equally significant was a change made in the instruction manual. Infants were now admitted to the guild. As they came of age they built furniture, not according to the original specifications, but according to instructions from the foremen, who in turn received their instructions from the chairman of the board, a new position created to standardize production. This chairman, the workers were told, was in direct contact with the founding carpenter. Therefore his word wasn't to be doubted. All prints and instructions issued by him were binding and superseded any prior orders.

In reality there were now two guilds, one that built furniture according to the original specifications, and another that built bogus furniture. Sadly, many workers switched to this second guild.

But not all, and that really is what this story is about. There were those who continued putting out furniture exactly like the original carpenter and his assistants built. The bogus furniture wasn't able to give rest to the users, a fact that the artisans from the original guild didn't hesitate to point out.

The result was a clash. Intermittently, for well over a thousand years the bogus builders made a concentrated effort to destroy the furniture built according to the original specs. Hundreds of thousands of the artisans were executed. Just as many had to relocate to new areas, where they immediately began producing furniture, establishing local guilds.

Quality control was a constant struggle throughout the centuries. There were times when the artisans, rather than meet the high standards of the guild, would simply give

up the trade and take up a new occupation. There was also the problem of wages. Many left, deluded by the prospect of higher wages.

The 16th century once again brought about several fundamental changes in the furniture industry, both brought about by foremen of the bogus furniture company.

In the first case, a foreman became convinced that the furniture produced by his guild was substandard and that fundamental changes would have to be made. Consequently he took the instruction manual used by the bogus furniture company and began crossing out what he considered false, and adding what he felt was lacking. With this improved manual he set up a third guild. While the furniture produced by this new guild was definitely of better quality than that of the bogus guild, it was by no means comparable to the original furniture.

The story of the other foreman who left the bogus guild bears some resemblance to the first, but the end result is totally different. This one too believed that the furniture being produced was reject, but rather than try and edit the faulty manual, he looked around and saw furniture that met the specifications of the original prints and manual. He sought out the artisans who built this furniture and acquired a set for his own home. Soon after he was appointed a foreman in the original guild, which at this time was at a low ebb. Through his efforts it again became productive and new markets were opened, most significantly, although quite a few years later, in the New World.

The original furniture industry in North America got off to a slow start, at least when compared with the other two guilds. Nevertheless, it became firmly established and homes were furnished with genuine furniture, identical to that which the founding carpenter built.

But then a problem arose. Through the centuries children were never accepted as members of the guild, as was the case with the competition. Nevertheless—and we insert here that the instruction manual places great importance on this—children were expected to assist their carpenter parents in their work. Not as members of the guild, but as a type of apprentice. Each one had to make a personal decision when the age of choice was reached.

The problem was that carpenter parents didn't require that their children spend enough time in the shop, so when they reached the age of choice, they didn't chose. They said the furniture being built was old-fashioned. The guild knew that without an influx of new carpenters, sales would drop and eventually bankruptcy would stare them in the face.

The solution they hit upon was to “modernize” the shop, make it attractive to the young people. Furniture was streamlined. Those who entered the guild as artisans did so without the commitment to produce furniture according to the original carpenter's specifications.

The result was an increase in production, but a decrease in quality.

One of the artisans, seeing the steady decline in quality, spoke to some of the foremen, showing them that the furniture being built wasn't according to the original specifications. There was a certain willingness to agree, but not to change. The solution was to set up shop up the street and build furniture that strictly adhered to the master carpenter's plan.

By no means was it a landslide business, yet there was steady growth. It became

evident that there were still customers looking for exactly the kind of furniture they were producing. Soon local guilds were being established in different states. Finally in different countries, and then continents.

This may sound grandiose, but if actual numbers are compared to the population of the world today, we must admit the market segment is small; very small; very, very small...

This isn't reason for discouragement. The manual is very specific on this point: Few people want good furniture. The master carpenter makes it plain that the buyer must be adapted to the furniture, and not the furniture to the buyer. Guilds that build according to the buyer's specifications are working overtime to produce enough furniture.

As we step into the 21st century, what are the prospects of continuing to make furniture according to the original specifications? Or, as has happened so many times during the last two thousands years, will there be a tendency to adapt the furniture to the buyer?

Surely there will be, but we feel to set out something even more real: Sloppy workmanship.

Within the guild there is a strong awareness of the importance of not deviating from the original specifications. It is comforting to know that the print and manual used are exact copies of the original—not copies of copies of copies...

An effort is made to select the best wood and to cut each piece to the exact size. But alas, at times the mortis and tenon joints don't fit properly and the furniture—built to specifications—soon becomes wobbly. The planing and sanding, which demand elbow grease, are neglected, and the furniture—built to specifications—just won't sell.

And then there is the problem of building furniture—according to specifications—but not getting it done. The artisans talk about furniture, they have meetings about furniture, they extol the durability of their furniture. But they don't get it built.

One day the master carpenter will return to inspect all the furniture ever built. He will bring with him a set of the furniture he built. Then one by one he'll call the artisans and say, "I want to see the furniture you built. Put it up next to mine." He will get up and carefully inspect each piece, measuring, laying it on its side, even turning it upside down, running his hand over the surface, not missing a single detail, looking for defects. Expecting perfection.

We see everything imaginable.

We see furniture that doesn't even remotely resemble the original.

Some artisans come empty-handed.

Some bring unassembled pieces of furniture.

Some bring elaborately carved furniture, with a glossy surface.

In each case an order is given to a helper and both the artisan and his furniture are thrown into an incinerator.

We see an elderly lady, probably in her eighties. She stands beside her furniture, head bowed. The master carpenter doesn't turn her furniture on end, or upside down. He just stands back and looks first at his own furniture, then at hers. He smiles. "Mary," he says, "how many children did you raise around this table?" For the first time she looks up, and sees he is smiling. "Fourteen," she replies. "Anyone else?" he asks. "Well, I took some children in." He asks, "How many?" She says, "I don't know." He says, "I do. Fifteen!" He continues, "This furniture looks just like new. Just like mine. Tell me, what

did the 29 children you raised at this table do in life?” The old lady smiles. “They were all carpenters. They made furniture just like this.” The master carpenter walks up to the old lady and gives her a big hug. Pointing to the right he says, “See that mansion up on the hill? That’s where you’re going to live from now on.”

Next is a young artisan—maybe 17 or 18 years old. “How many years were you a carpenter?” the master asks. “Only six months.” The master looks pleased. “Then what happened?” The youth replies gravely. “The local guild was having a meeting, when our building was set afire...” Seeing the inquisitive look of the master, he continues. “We all burned up, but not our furniture.” The master lovingly strokes the fire resistant wood. After tenderly embracing the young man, he points to the right...

A man in his mid seventies. “You were a foreman in your local guild, is that right?” “That’s right.” The master carefully examines the furniture and then asks, “Did all the artisans under you do this kind of work?” The man thought for a moment. “No, not all. I feel badly about it...yet I believe that most of them did.” The master smiles, “Don’t feel bad. One of my initial artisans let me down too. Incidentally, I have seen some beautiful furniture that was made in your local guild...”

A middle-aged man. “Please bring your furniture up closer. Right next to mine.” The master says no more. He doesn’t look at the furniture, but at the artisan, who is silent. The master also remains silent, and the silence becomes embarrassing. The man shuffles his feet back and forth. Silence. It becomes unbearable and the man bursts out: “I know my product isn’t up to specs...I used choice lumber and cut everything according to the print...but I didn’t have...I thought I didn’t have time...for the finish work...” The master calls his helper. “Take him away...”

In this little paper, we don’t usually leave blank spaces. Today we will. Fill this space with your thoughts. Imagine that your furniture has just been set up next to the master carpenter’s furniture.

Good reader, would you mind having your thoughts published here? ▲

A story

Anonymous

The Rich Family in Our Church

I’ll never forget Easter 1948. I was 14, my sister Ocy 12, and my older sister Darlene 16. We lived at home with our mother and the four of us knew what it was to do without many things.

My dad had died five years before, leaving Mom with seven school children to raise—and no money. By 1945, my older sisters were married and my brothers had left home.

A month before Easter, the pastor of our church announced that a special Easter love offering would be taken to help a poor family. He asked everyone to save and give sacrificially like Jesus did.

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When we got home, we talked about what we could do. We decided to buy 50 pounds of potatoes and live on them for a month. This would allow us to save 20 dollars of our grocery money for the love offering. Then we thought that if we kept our electric lights turned out as much as possible, we'd save money on that month's electrical bill. Darlene got as many house and yard cleaning jobs as possible and both of us baby-sat for everybody we could. For 15 cents we could buy enough cotton loops to make three pot holders to sell for one dollar. We made 20 dollars on pot holders.

That month was one of the best of our lives. Every day we counted the money to see how much we had saved. At night we'd sit in the dark and talk about how the poor family was going to enjoy the money the church would give them. We had about 80 people in our church and we figured that any amount we had to give, the offering would surely be 20 times that much. After all, every Sunday the pastor had reminded everyone to save for the sacrificial love offering.

The day before Easter, Ocy and I walked to the grocery store and got the manager to give us three crisp 20 dollar bills and one ten for all our change. We ran all the way home to show Mom and Darlene. We had never had so much money before.

That night we were so excited we could hardly sleep. We didn't care that we wouldn't have new clothes for Easter. We had 70 dollars for the sacrificial love offering. We could hardly wait to go to church.

On Sunday morning it was pouring rain. We didn't own an umbrella, and the church was over a mile from our home, but it didn't seem to matter how wet we got. Darlene had cardboard in her shoes to fill the holes. The cardboard came apart and her feet got wet. But we sat in church proudly. I heard some teenage girls talking about the Smith girls having on their old dresses. I looked at them in their new clothes and felt so rich.

When the sacrificial love offering was taken, we were sitting in the second row from the front. Mom put in the ten dollar bill and each of us girls put in a twenty. As we walked home from church, we sang all the way. At lunch Mom had a surprise for us. She had bought a dozen eggs and we had boiled Easter eggs with our fried potatoes.

Late that afternoon the minister drove up in his car. Mom went to the door, talked with him for a moment and then came back with an envelope in her hand. We asked what it was, but she didn't say a word. She opened the envelope and out fell a bunch of money. There were three crisp twenty dollar bills, one ten and seventeen one dollar bills. Mom put the money back in the envelope. We didn't talk, just sat and stared at the floor. We had gone from feeling like millionaires to feeling like poor white trash. We children had such a happy life that we felt sorry for anyone who didn't have our mom and dad for parents and a house full of brothers and sisters and other kids visiting constantly. We thought it was fun to share silverware and see whether we got the fork or the spoon that night. We had two knives which we passed around to whoever needed them. I knew we didn't have a lot of things that others had, but I'd never thought that we were poor. That Easter Day I found out what we were. The minister had brought us the money for the poor family, so we must be poor. I didn't like being poor. I looked at my dress and worn out shoes and felt so ashamed that I didn't want

to go back to church. Everyone there probably already knew we were poor! I thought about school. I was in the ninth grade and at the top of my class of over one hundred students. I wondered if the children at school knew we were poor. I decided I could quit school since I had finished the eighth grade. That was all the law required at that time.

We sat in silence for a long time. Then it got dark and we went to bed. All that week we girls went to school and came home and no one talked much. Finally on Saturday Mom asked us what we wanted to do with the money. What did poor people do with money? We didn't know. We'd never known we were poor.

We didn't want to go to church on Sunday, but Mom said we had to. Although it was a sunny day, we didn't talk on the way. Mom started to sing, but no one joined in, and she sang only one verse. At church we had a missionary speaker. He talked about how churches in Africa made buildings out of sun-dried bricks, but they needed money to buy roofs. He said one hundred dollars would put a roof on a church. The minister said, "Can't we all sacrifice to help these poor people and show God's love?" We looked at each other and smiled for the first time in the week. Mom reached into her purse and pulled out the envelope. She passed it to Darlene. Darlene gave it to me and I handed it to Ocy. Ocy put it in the offering.

When the offering was counted, the minister announced that it was a little over one hundred dollars. We were the rich family in the church! Hadn't the missionary said so? From that day on I've never been poor again. I've always remembered how rich I am because I have Jesus who loves me.

A rich person is: Someone who has family and friends, and always has Jesus in his/her heart. No matter how hard things are going, God will provide what you need, as long as you ask him for His help, God does great things, and he uses your family and friends to bless your life.

Another moral of this story I would like to point out is that love for God and for people means giving. Give all that you have and you will be rewarded. And if you do not have much money, you can also give of your time and talents to serve Him. But do it with a cheerful heart.

God bless you! 

Your Brazilian Sister Writes

By Isabel Barbosa

How God Helped My Family

[We would like to believe that when a poor person gets converted, this has a positive reflex even on the material aspect of life. Often this is the case. Much more important, however, is how that someone poor and semiliterate can acquire the "wisdom of the just," thus being able to face and solve problems that are far beyond their educational or cultural background.]

Sister Isabel lives in Goiânia, a city of a million plus inhabitants. It used to take her two hours to

go to church on a bus, or rather, busses. Then another two hours to return home. (Young couples without chores or children who get to church late, or worse, miss church altogether, are more than slack; they lack the wisdom of the just, no matter what their last name or social status.)]

I feel to share with you something very wonderful that God did for my family. It has brought us great happiness.

My husband was a smoker. He was constantly trying to break the habit and my children and I always prayed that he would manage. At the same time we complained a lot about the cigarette smell we had to put up with. I well remember the time he was leaving on a trip and said to my youngest son, “May God bless you.” My son replied, “How can you say, ‘May God bless you’ with that cigarette in your hand?”

One day I told my children, “We’re not going to talk to your dad anymore about his smoking. We’re only going to pray.” That’s that we did, and it brought results. He began to say that he needed to take some medicine that would clear up his lungs. Apparently he thought that if he could clear up his lungs it would be easier to quit smoking.

One day when he was about to come home from work for lunch, someone knocked on the door. It was an evangelical woman who was selling medicine to help people quit smoking. We talked together a little and I told her I was praying for my husband. While we were still talking, he came home. He didn’t want to buy the medicine, so this woman gave him some advice; she told my husband we were praying for him. When she said that he looked at me and I could see this made him feel good.

When I went back into the house, I went into the bedroom to pray. Exactly while I was praying he walked in unannounced. He quit smoking. My dad decided to quit smoking at the same time, but didn’t manage.

My husband no longer smokes, but is still in the world. In our house we have TV and a stereo. This means that we have a little corner of hell right in our house. Sometimes I can’t even stay in the same room with my family. Pray so that my husband and children will get converted. ▲

Your Mozambican Brother Writes

by João Luzes Bonesse

Does God Hate the Radio?

[The Portuguese language which Mozambique and Brazil have in common creates a link between the church there and here. We supply them with tracts, Sunday School material, the Portuguese Messenger, as well as the different books we have in print. They in turn send us articles to be printed in our Mensageiro. The difference between the Portuguese spoken in Mozambique and Brazil is roughly the same as the difference between the English spoken in Nigeria and N America. As you read this article—condensed—notice again how the wisdom of the just is more powerful than the counsel of men.]

I would like to tell an experience I had several years ago. I hope that God will bless this experience so that it will be of help to others who may have doubts about the radio.

After I was born again in 1994, I hoped that the missionaries would soon come to teach us the Christian doctrines, but since that didn't happen, Satan quite effortlessly deceived me with doubts about the radio. He knew that the radio was one of my favorite attractions in the world.

Some of my doubts were: Does God really hate the radio? Does the Bible say anything about the radio? Since the Bible teaches us not to add anything to it, wouldn't banning the radio be a manmade rule?

With my heart totally divided, I began asking other Christians and preachers what they thought about the radio. I wanted to see if they agreed that God hates the radio. Not one of them said a word against the radio, but rather defended it, which helped my desire for the radio grow even more.

Every time I thought about leaving my beloved pastime, my reasons for not doing so increased, while my faith in the Church of God in Christ decreased. I thought to myself: Why am I troubling myself with something I don't even understand? After all, is this the only church in this world?

In June of 1995, I quit going to services in this church and began attending in another church that allows the radio. The words of the Bible came true in my life, where it says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death".

The loving God was greatly concerned about me, one of His sheep that had gone astray. He didn't want me to have a false hope of salvation.

Thanks to God, within a month I heard God call. With His help I understood that I was joining myself to a false religion. I could see where this group didn't adhere to the teachings of the Bible, so I left them.

Even so, Satan continued to darken my spiritual understanding. If he couldn't deceive me one way, he would try another. What I wanted now was to belong to a church that allowed the radio and at the same time kept all of the other doctrines of the Bible as taught by the Mennonite church. I looked into the doctrines of eight or ten different churches, but didn't find a single one that taught the truth according to the Bible, which is our judge.

I knew the truth and now I had to make a decision. This was a time of real struggle, for I had to choose between the true and the false; between the true gospel of the Creator, which excluded the pleasure I so desired, but assured me of a future home in heaven; and a false gospel with the pleasures of this world, with my radio, but a sad final destiny in hell.

During this time I was confronted with some serious questions: Should I lose my salvation and home in heaven all because of the radio? Could a radio possibly be worth more than my salvation? How much time would I have in this world to enjoy my radio?

With a heavy heart, I humbled myself, knelt down and prayed, imploring God's forgiveness for my disobedience. I asked the Lord to enlighten me so that I could

overcome my doubts concerning the radio. I persevered in prayer and God forgave me. What a joy filled my heart! There was no longer any condemnation.

Through a number of dreams, God helped me to come to a knowledge of the true church of God:

One night I dreamt I was going to church. I was carrying my Bible and I noticed that the scenery on both sides of the road had changed completely. Where before there had been tall grass, I now saw a beautiful garden, and in the place where we had our meetings, which was under a large shade tree, there were now rows of brightly painted cottages.

Another night I had a beautiful dream in which I saw a multitude of joyous people. Their clothes were the same color and it looked like they were wearing uniforms. I saw men and women, youth and adults. They were singing a beautiful song, throughout which I kept hearing the wonderful word: Salvation.

I had dreams that dealt specifically with the radio. I saw my radio in the midst of leaping flames of fire. They were so terrible that I didn't want to ever see them again, but the dream kept coming back. It was apparent that God wanted me to be absolutely sure in my conviction.

Dear reader, before continuing I want to tell you that I had removed the batteries from my radio and it was "well turned off," stuck away in my satchel.

One night I dreamt that smoke was coming out of the satchel in which I had my radio. In a matter of seconds the satchel burst into a great flame of fire. Moments later the ceiling of my house was in flames. I found this amazing and asked myself: From where did these flames come? Deep within I knew the answer: They came from the motor (sic) of my radio.

One night I saw something shiny out in the distance in my dream. I was curious to know what it was, so slowly I approached it. I thought I would pick up whatever it was and take it with me. I reached out to pick it up, when I discovered it wasn't my radio, as I had thought. It looked like my radio, but in reality was a deadly land mine.

I dreamt one night that an electrical cord had heated up and was smoking. I wanted to know where the cord was plugged in, so I followed it and soon got to what was causing that smoke. I saw a great flame surrounding my radio.

This is the last dream I had. I was in my house when someone called me from outside. I ran to the door and peeked outside to see who it was. Seeing it was a visitor, I quickly ran and threw a cover over the satchel with my radio; I didn't want anyone to know that I had it. Then I went to the door and invited my guest in. We were having an enjoyable time together, and little did I suspect that in just a moment that radio hid in the bottom of my satchel would cause me great shame. At the same time both of us heard it turn itself on. It both frightened and shook me up. I asked myself: How could something like this happen? How can a radio without any power, that is well turned off, begin to function? My guest asked me, "Do the Mennonites give you liberty to have a radio?" I was speechless. The only thing I managed was to look down in shame. But within me I knew the answer: No, the Mennonites don't have radios. But I was ashamed to even say so.

Now I knew the answer to my question without the shadow of a doubt: It's true. God hates the radio. I had absolutely no doubt that it is of the world; a tool in Satan's hands. It is a great murderer of souls in this world. I also say: Anyone who enjoys a radio does not have true peace in his heart, because the radio is the destroyer of peace.

As shown in one of my dreams, the radio is like a land mine, which is very dangerous. It is capable of maiming or killing a human being in less than a minute. The radio likewise can sidetrack the human mind in a matter of seconds, as well as contaminate the heart.

As everyone knows: Land mine! Danger of death! Be careful! Do not come near!

For those of us who are dead to sin and alive to the Spirit, the message is: Radio! Danger of Death! Be careful! Do not come near!

Beloved in Christ, let us always keep away from all uncleanness, and even though we are called fools, may we not become discouraged. It is better to be thought a fool in the few days of life which remain, than to spend an unending eternity in literal flames of fire.

Read Philippians 3:8 and Galatians 1:11-12. ▲

This & That

Daniel & Anna Kramer spent several weeks in Acaraú visiting the mission, and their children, John & Sheila Kramer, and of course, their grandchildren.

The Errol Redger farm sale was on June 3. The family spent several weeks here during this time.

The youth from the Rio Verdinho and Monte Alegre congregations had a cleanup day at the Leonard Koepl home place. Edinei & Janete Alves will be living there.

On June 10 was the Caleb Holdeman farm sale. They will making their home in Iowa. On the 11th the Monte Alegre Congregation had a farewell for them. Bira & Francine Bernardes will be living in their house here.

June 12 was the opening day of the III Boys' Preparatory Class here in Brazil, held at the Monte Alegre Congregation. The instructor was Min. Harold H. Koehn, from Montezuma, with Min. Arlo Hibner and Dean Mininger doubling as assistant instructors and interpreters. Fourteen boys attended the class: André Passos, from the Monte Alegre Cong.; Eudes Reinor, from the Boa Esperança Cong. in Mato Grosso; Fernando Barros, from the Rio Verde Cong.; Flávio Silva, from the Patos mission; Jeremy Ensz, son of Gerald & Marilyn Ensz, from Fawnsdale, Alabama; Joedson Bessa, from the Monte Alegre Cong.; Jonathan Benner, son of Doug & Barbara Benner, from—they moved; Kevin Hibner, son of Glenn & Elizabeth Hibner, from the Boa Esperança Cong.; Lawrence Kramer, son of Dennis & Frieda Kramer, from the Boa Esperança Cong.; Marcos Duarte, from the Rio Verdinho Cong.; Marvin Yoder, son of Paul & Rachel Yoder, from the Monte Alegre Cong.; Nelson Koehn, son of Lee & Elizabeth Koehn, from Burns, KS; Robert Kramer,

son of Dan & Marlene Kramer, from the Boa Esperança Cong.; Vilmar Vieira, from the Patos mission.

Lawrence & Wilma Friesen spent some time in the Patos mission with their children, the Dan Peasters, and their grandchildren. They also spent a few days on the Colony. Mr. & Mrs. James Byler, from Bonners Ferry Idaho, spent a little over a week in Brazil checking into the possibility of building barns for the Perdigão chicken project.

On June 17, Glenn Hibners, Paula Schultz and Amy Wiens spent the weekend visiting the Mirassol, São Paulo mission. From there they went to the city of São Paulo, where the girls caught their flights back to the US.

On June 18 the area youth had a carry-in dinner at the Monte Alegre social hall in honor of the boys who were here for class.

Preachers are a privileged class of people. They don't have to worry about staying busy. Others make sure they don't get any time off. So after a grueling two weeks instructing the boys here at Monte Alegre, which terminated with a program on Saturday evening, June 24, Harold Koehn, together with Min. Richard Mininger from the Rio Verdinho Cong., began a week of revival meeting at the Rio Verde Cong.

A group rented a large van and took a trip to Iguaçu Falls and the Curitiba mission.

Those who went were: the Adejenes Lima family, André Passos, Marvin Yoder, Joedson Bessa, Melvyn and Norman Souto, Jonathan Benner, Jeremy Ensz.

The Nelson Unruh family spent several weeks visiting the Acaraú mission.

Three years ago, June 19, 2000 was set as the date in which the Perdigão plant in Rio Verde would go into operation. The schedule was kept to the day. Five hundred hogs are being slaughtered per day, just a shadow of the 3,250 head that are to be processed daily when the plant is fully operative. It should be noted that not all the hogs seen on the highways and on city streets are headed to Perdigão. These hogs, registered stock, more often are seen in late model cars than in trucks (and when in trucks, always up front, ~~with~~ the driver). These, ah...Roadhogs (that's the unglamorous scientific name of the breed) were evidently bred ~~up~~ down from the *Catagonus wagneri* (vulgarly known as a wild hog). These wild h...*Catagonus wagneri* loose on Brazilian expressways have lost none of their primitive savageness. Coming home from Goiânia last evening, we tried to stay within speed limit and all the way, all the 220 km., there were *Catagonus Wagneri* passing us in trucks and cars and pickups, going uphill, going downhill, on curves, on bridges, in no-passing zones. True to their primitive nature, they were ready to kill and be killed. Which very often happens. That's the reason we try never to drive or travel at night. Well, I guess that's about all I have to say about the Perdigão hog project.

I have a magazine clipping here on my desk that says that 50.3% of the cell phone owners in Brazil are using the *pré-pago* system, similar to your long distance cards that give you so many minutes, or whatever, of talking time. The advantage to this system on cell phones is that there is no monthly fee and no charge on any incoming calls. This is excellent for people who's monthly income doesn't allow for very much

air time. It is estimated that by the end of the year there will be a total of 22 million cell phone users in Brazil.

We just finished translating *No Proselytes in Zion*, by the Stoppels. It was serialized in our *Mensagem*, so we have already gotten some feedback from our Brazilian members, which, mostly, has been very positive. Once this book is in print, hopefully within three months, I'm quite sure it will be suggested reading for anyone coming to the church from the outside. Any of you folks in N America who haven't read this book need to do so.

Did you know that Oscar Niemeyer, the architect that gave Brasília its distinctive shape and taste, is a communist?

McDonald's just opened its 500th eating joint in Brazil. In one hour they consume 7 steers, 226 chickens, 457 apples, 1,000 heads of lettuce, 2,740 buns. 31,000 straws and 129,000 napkins are used, but not consumed. Faith and I ate at McDonalds while in Goiânia. For what we paid for a little bit of food and a lot of marketing, we could have eaten in one of the better restaurants and gotten some of the best food in the world and no marketing. So why did we eat there? Marketing.

Answer this one: How could Gillette spend one BILLION dollars to develop their Mach3 razor? If that's how much it takes to develop a dinky razor, then Thomas Edison should have spent at least a HUNDRED TRILLION bucks to develop the light bulb. Right or wrong?

You think gasoline is getting expensive in N America? We over here are paying the equivalent of approximately three dollars and fifty cents for a gallon of gasoline. Low quality stuff. Eggs cost around 70 cents a dozen. Good quality fresh beef costs a little over a dollar a pound. Pork is less. Pasteurized milk runs in the neighborhood of US\$1.50 per gallon. A good meal in a common restaurant, which includes *churrasco*, seldom costs much more than two dollars.