



Brazil News

August 00

No. 111

Editorial

Doctrine for Dummies

Admittedly this title has just a bit of a sacrilegious ring to it. Nevertheless, please read on.

In recent years book stores have been flooded by a variety of "for Dummies" books: Windows for Dummies (how to operate a computer), Personal Finance for Dummies, Cooking for Dummies, Investing for Dummies, among many others. These books are tailored to people who don't have patience, ambition or time to go through the normal steps of learning a new skill or vocation. The "for Dummies" books, written in a facetious, down-to-earth manner, are meant to take the drudgery out of learning and make it an entertaining experience.

It can be argued that in an agitated world, the "for Dummies" method of learning is better than no learning at all. True.

The "for Dummies" method of learning relies on a minimum of instructions that will give a maximum of results, which are hyped up to give an exaggerated feeling of accomplishment. Thus a computer illiterate can be "running a computer" in less

than an hour. A dozen lessons later he will be tossing out technical terms like a pro.

In all fairness, we must admit that the "for Dummies" books do an excellent job of giving a basic knowledge to those who can't, or won't, learn otherwise. Yet it wouldn't be fair to compare a "for Dummies" student with the one who has spent long hours pouring over text books and

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manuals, not only learning that something can be done, but *how* it is done and *why* it is done, and *when*. This is where you separate the men from the boys.

The other morning in church, while listening (or not listening) to the Sunday School opening, it hit me I should give the youth boys in the class which I teach a little test. So I did.

But first just a quick word on the class. There were 16 boys present. As I have at different times mentioned, these boys are a source of inspiration to me—an inspiration which at times creeps into the articles I write for this little paper. Their level of spirituality would be comparable to that of any spiritual group of youth boys in N America, Africa, or Haiti.

After asking everyone to shut their quarterlies and asking a preliminary question on how many knew the title of the lesson, we proceeded to the first question, actually three questions:

- 1) Do you read out of necessity and not for pleasure?
- 2) Do you enjoy reading?
- 3) Do you enjoy reading enough to where you read every chance you get?

Four students admitted they read out of necessity, but don't really enjoy it that much.

Ten said they enjoyed reading.

Two said they read every chance they get.

Next: Do you know more or less in what century Menno Simons lived?

One had an idea.

Have you ever done some reading in the *Martyrs Mirror*?

Eight.

Who wrote the *Mirror of Truth*?

Two.

Are you familiar with the book, *Keeping the Faith*?

One.

Have you ever read the Bible from cover to cover?

Zero.

On this last question it was suggested by the students that possibly there is no value in reading the Bible from cover to cover. To bolster this thought, a minister was quoted who said he had never felt to do so.

End of the test.

During most of human history, literacy has been a privilege of the few. All too often oligarchic ruling classes, as well as state churches, made a concentrated effort to retain power by keeping the masses in ignorance, and this by denying them an education.

Yet it appears that among the children of God, there were always those who were literate, especially in the clergy. These took it upon themselves to transmit the fruit of their literacy to the brothers and sisters in the faith, who committed to memory chapters, indeed entire books, of the Bible. As the *Martyrs Mirror* amply proves, they were not shackled by illiteracy, but much to the contrary were able to brilliantly defend themselves when brought before lettered ecclesiastics.

We must avoid attributing the performance of these peasant brethren while under extreme duress to the amount of Scripture committed to memory. That is knowledge—very useful knowledge, we add—but not the key. The powerful defense of the Gospel and the doctrines of the church made by these brethren, hauled out of dungeons and brought into the presence of men with power to

torture or snuff out their lives, must be attributed to their ability to *wield* the Scriptures hid in their hearts. That is wisdom. The wisdom of the just.

One of the trademarks of the Menonites throughout the centuries has been their industriousness, dedication and sincerity in all matters pertaining to life. It was exactly these qualities that helped tip the balance in their favor when exemption from military service became an issue in times of war. It has also been these qualities that has made it possible to make a worthy living without higher education.

Lamentably, we are failing. The trademark that for so many years shone brightly, has lost some of its luster, especially on the younger generation. If the hand that astounded King Belshazzar were to draw a graph on the wall of our Conference showing what affluence is doing to this trademark, we too would shout out in alarm.

We could talk about a decline in work standards, in that pristine honesty that doesn't mix "yea" and "nay" with "maybe" ("yeabe" and "naybe"). Rather we will discuss what this article is about: A decline in the importance that is being placed on truly understanding the doctrines of the church.

Research. Without research there would be no vehicles, no telephones, no electricity, no modern medicine, no...this list could fill volumes. Research means "digging;" it is "close, careful study" (AHD), or, as we read about the brethren in Thessalonica, who "received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily, *whether those things were so.*"

In spiritual research, contrary to

scientific research, we don't "dig" to come up with something new, but rather to unearth the old, to access the many deep mysteries of the Gospel. This is where we today are erring. We are satisfied to mentally thumb through a "Doctrines for Dummies" book to get an instant and superficial idea of what we believe, and then go on to more important and pressing things in life.

Our forefathers, which include the martyr brethren didn't have a lot of (if any) concordances and commentaries at their disposal. They had no Bible study books, no Sunday School quarterlies. Yet their knowledge of the Scriptures and the doctrines of the church leaves us blushing.

In proving our "inside" converts, about the closest we get to testing their knowledge of the Scriptures and doctrines of the church at times is to ask, "Do you read your Bible?" If the answer is yes, they are assumed to be doctrinally sound. True, we can't expect that an eleven or twelve year old child to have an extensive knowledge of the Scriptures or doctrines of the church. But isn't it true that from here on out if they continue reading the Bible, going to Sunday School and Bible study, we assume they are acquiring a Gospel "education?"

A Gospel education requires digging, it means finding out firsthand "*whether those things were so.*" It means "studying up" on doctrine. During the above mentioned Sunday School class, the subject of the millennium came up. Not one of the students was able to explain how we believe.

I have noticed that when we organize for Bible study, one of the first

questions that comes up is: "What book will we study?" Somehow we have associated the success of Bible study with the study book used. If things are slow, we assume we have chosen the wrong book. Right or wrong?

Instead of trying to hand our doctrines to the youth on a platter, why not hand them the platter and ask them to place the doctrines on it?

How?

Let's take the subject of the millennium. During the first class an experienced brother would give a talk on the subject. He would refer to the writings of Menno Simons, Dietrich Phillip, John Holdeman and others. He would point out what our new church doctrine book has to say about the millennium. There could be a short discussion and then everyone would go home and begin studying up on this doctrine. The following class, or classes, would be discussions in which the students would bring their findings. And yes, their questions. Depending on the subject, it might be necessary to have four or five classes to get to the bottom of the issue. Maybe even more.

Repeatedly the issue of sports is brought up. Is it proper to play volley ball, or whatever, in youth gatherings. Since there is nothing inherently wrong with volley ball, it can be concluded that they could spend their time doing things a lot worse than that. So true. But it's such shallow thinking. Sports aren't right because worse things could be done, but *can* be wrong because of better things that *should* be done.

We aren't suggesting there should never be any volleyball, but we ask, what would be wrong with at least

occasional youth meetings in which there would be exercises in which the millennium would be debated? Or any other doctrine?

Some place we came up with the idea that to learn a doctrine, we need some kind of an outline. We need a study book that will tell us where to dig and how to dig and what we will find.

Wrong. All wrong. We're in danger of turning out a generation of Christians that lack resourcefulness, that find no joy in digging, in doing research. We older Christians must show the youth that Menno Simons can be more interesting than Popular Mechanics, and that reading *Bible Doctrine and Practice* isn't an obligation, but a privilege. Parents, leaders, how many times have you encouraged your youth to read *Keeping the Faith*, to become acquainted with church history?

The little test I did on my Sunday School class may seem to reflect negatively on them. Maybe it does. But much more, it reflects negatively on us older ones. If they aren't acquainted with the doctrines and history of the church, we are to blame. And it is we who must take the first steps if this situation is to be reverted.

Now for a few suggestions:

More lectures should be given in Bible study by older brethren, followed by discussions.

We should rely less on prepared lessons and more on the direction of the Spirit in our Bible study classes.

We should wake up to the fact that if we're not careful, we're going to come up with a generation of doctrinally illiterate brothers and sisters. Consequently the study of doctrines should be placed

on the priority list, way up on top. *Bible Doctrine and Practice* would make an excellent textbook. Never should we get the idea that only ministers and missionaries need to have a good knowledge of the doctrines and history of the church.

Why not eliminate some of the abuses of gift exchanges at Christmas time by giving books instead of unnecessary gifts, especially to our youth? (I shall always remember the year I received a complete *Clark's Commentary*). Just as our youth have their own Bible, which they can mark up, they should all have a set of our basic church books, which they also *should* mark up.

We Mennonites aren't adverse to working overtime. That's where the money is. Spiritually, it is those who put in overtime acquainting themselves with the doctrines and history of the church who find where the blessings are. Unless this desire can be rekindled, our usefulness, indeed our very identity, will slowly melt away, until we are Mennonites only in name.

When I worked at Hesston Corporation, I had the privilege of working with many fine Mennonites. I remember one especially who was active in his church, in community affairs and was a natural leader at work. One day he told about their Sunday School discussion the previous Sunday. They got onto the subject of a brother in their church who was a security guard at H.C., and of course, carried a firearm. They wondered how that fit into the Mennonite historical stand on non-resistance. They analyzed the subject from every side, "...but we just couldn't come to a conclusion."

If we cease to study our doctrines,

can you think of one single reason why we won't eventually lose our ability to come to conclusions on basic doctrine?

Life on the Colony

[The following article was read at the farewell for Alma, Mrs. John Penner, who is returning to the US, to the Inman Congregation, where her daughter Marlys lives. John was the first minister to serve the Colony, which he, together with Alma, did for over 25 years, until health problems caused him to retire. He passed away four years ago and is buried in the Monte Alegre cemetery.]

The Old Country

The "Old Country," as used in our midst, refers to the country of origin of our forefathers. Sadly, for many this term has no special connotation—in fact, in most cases it is totally meaningless. What Old Country...?

Today, as we enter the 21st century, a word that is bounced back and forth as a basketball in a tournament is "virtual." So many aspects of life have become "virtual," giving way to the term "virtual reality," which, for all practical purposes, is a reality that isn't real. It makes no sense? Exactly.

Back in the Old Country nothing was virtual. Reality was very, very real. David's solemn declaration to his friend Jonathan, "There is but a step between me and death," was a reality, so different from today when there are so many steps between us and death, an ambulance, a helicopter, a surgeon, a transfusion, a transplant, a vaccine, a pacemaker, a

cell phone, a satellite. No, back those days life was very real. Demographic growth was held in check, indeed often sent into a tailspin, by smallpox, diphtheria, plagues, appendicitis, childbirth, and innumerable other misadventures that today have either been eradicated or domesticated.

Folks born in the Old Country had a different mentality than the present generation. Society owed them nothing. Money, not credit, determined if an item was purchased. When debts were incurred, they were not only a financial obligation, but a spiritual obligation as well. They borrowed only as a last resort. A favor received was never forgotten, never taken for granted. And yet to do a favor was seen as a sacred obligation. With only one step between them and death, they were able, from the bottom of their heart, to thank the Lord for life each day.

The Old Country generation now lies in silence. Most of their children and grandchildren have joined them. Alas, today children who scornfully label their parents as backward, as not being with it, as out of touch with reality, are shamelessly treading on the sacred ground of their inheritance, kicking sand into the burning bush with their high top boots.

We say that life is far more complex than it was in the Old Country. This new complexity, we reason, demands a new mentality. If those from the Old Country were brought to life and thrust into today's society, we say, they wouldn't know how to handle it.

Maybe.

And maybe not.

Let's face facts, facts as they are, not

virtual facts. If the folks from the Old Country would have trouble fitting into today's world, where does that leave the martyr brethren? Where does it leave the apostles? Where does it leave the three Hebrew children who chose to stand in the fiery furnace rather than to kneel before the king's image? Where does it leave Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the patriarchs?

Are we today a superior race, a super endowed people, like the Aryans who Hitler believed would rule the earth in a thousand year Reich? Are we better equipped to face the challenges of the 21st century than the patriarchs? As we see the terrible beast of the Web *talking* to and fro on this earth, penetrating the inner recesses of the heart of man, and we attempt to design a bridle that will permit us to domesticate it for our use, are we standing erect in the furnace or trembling before the king's image?

The patriarchs would gasp, like someone tossed into a pond of icy water, if they were suddenly transported to our time and situation. But their solid, down-to-earth principles, their hands-on approach to life, would sustain them. May we never deceive ourselves into thinking we are better equipped than our forefathers to meet the challenge of today. Virtual reality prepares no one for the reality of life, to stand erect in a fiery furnace.

It would be interesting this evening to ask for a raising of hands of all those who have seen in the lives of John & Alma a definite link with the past which we have just described. We thought that John Penner was kind of slow. But as I think of the old folks I knew in my childhood, my grandparents, they were

slow too. They were deliberate in their speech. They listened more than they spoke. They didn't constantly rearrange things in their houses. They seldom bought new furniture. They didn't have a lot of trinkets sitting around in their homes or pictures hanging on the walls. They didn't trade cars often. They didn't go on a lot of trips. The food they prepared was simple, but wholesome and delicious.

We sometimes thought John & Alma were a little different. But really, if we want to be honest, we'll have to admit that we're the ones who are different. We didn't realize, as we watched them, that we were seeing a portrait of our forefathers. We were glimpsing life as it used to be. We have changed, not they.

John & Alma Penner loved the church. They gave themselves to the work of the church. They understood that to love and serve their congregation was only their reasonable service. John was not a fire a brimstone preacher. His strength, and Alma's too, was in their quiet gentle way.

Yet they served with joy. They always took their ministry seriously and were keenly aware of the needs of the flock and faithfully discharged their duties so long as health permitted. They brought to life the words of the song that declare, "I will never ask Thee 'How' or 'Where' or 'Why?' / For I've cast my lost with Thee." Their love for those whom God entrusted to their care stands as a monument for all to see. For all to learn.

John has left us. Alma plans shortly to take leave of her home over here. Thus will end a beautiful chapter in the history of the church in Brazil. We

regret that too many times we failed to see the beauty as it was unfolding. Yet as we see the steady growth of the church in South America, we believe, we hope, that at least a little bit of the heritage from the Old Country has rubbed off on us here in Brazil, because of the faithfulness of John & Alma Penner.

A Brazilian Story

by *Ursulino Leão*

Experiences of a Small Town Doctor

He is a general practitioner and surgeon, she is a pediatrician. They both got their medical degrees in Brasília, graduating in the same class. Beside this, they were husband and wife. Young and full of dreams, they were anxiously awaiting the arrival of their first child.

Eager to get to work, armed with their diplomas, they hung out their shingles in a town in the southeast part of the state of Goiás. They did well and by the end of the first month were able to put back some money to be spent when their first child was born. As they took stock of their situation, they noticed that most of their patients were from a town way out in the boonies near the Mato Grosso border, a town that had no doctor. Say...!

They picked up their few belongings and were soon set up for business out on the frontier. Business was good and soon they managed to open a tiny, makeshift hospital with a few beds. One



the doctor had anticipated. The girl had an infected intestinal tumor that threatened to rupture at any moment, spreading its poison throughout the abdominal cavity of the already weakened patient. Now what?

We must remember that the doctor was working under very primitive conditions and that it would be a very difficult procedure. The tumor was successfully removed, but the patient's chances of recovery were woefully few.

of their clients was a large landholder. He came in and opened an account in the hospital. All of his hired men, plus his dad and mom, brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, nieces and nephews, would be their patients. He would pick up the tab for everyone—once a year, December, when, if satisfied, he would renew the contract for another year.

Then one day something happened that threatened not only the doctor's profession, but his very life. We remember this was frontier territory and that among the good folks there were also some unsavory characters. One of these, a known troublemaker, showed up one day at the hospital with his daughter, who was very sick. The diagnosis was acute appendicitis, which, of course, called for emergency surgery. Her dad gave the go-ahead.

It turned out to be much worse than

Out of surgery, the young doctor told the girl's dad what he had found and what could be expected. The man heard the somber prognosis without saying a word. Then there was a long silence. When he spoke, it was in a low, dreadful voice, "*Doctor, if that girl dies, you're a dead man. Remember that!*"

The poor doctor lost his appetite. He knew better than anyone else how poorly equipped he was to save his patient's life. Should she die, two graves would be dug in the local cemetery.

The thought of skipping the country crossed his mind, but there were two problems: First, the girl's father never left the hospital. He would immediately know if the doctor tried to skip the country. Second, never would he abandon his patients in the hospital. The only solution was to redouble his efforts to save the girl's life.

Slowly but surely his patient began to recover. Finally the day came that she was able to walk out of the hospital.

The story spread like wildfire—spread by the man who days before was prepared to dispatch the young doctor, and by his daughter. In a short time there was no way the young doctor could take care of all the patients who filled his waiting room.

Then one day he had another problem, of a different nature. A rich farmer rode up on a horse, together with his aged in-laws, who were on foot. The farmer wanted both of them to be hospitalized.

The doctor didn't beat around the bush. "This is a hospital and not a hotel. I can give both of your in-laws a thorough checkup and if they have some problem that merits time in the hospital they can stay. If they don't, you will have to find another place for them to stay."

"They *will* stay, even if there isn't a thing the matter with them," was the farmer's reply.

The doctor examined the elderly couple and found them both to be in excellent health. In an effort to humor the farmer, the doctor said he would hospitalize them for one week and put them on a heavy dose of vitamins, to put them in top shape.

A week went by and no sign of the farmer. Two weeks, three weeks. A month to the day the farmer showed up. He patiently listened while the doctor chewed him up one side and down the other. When the physician could think of nothing more to say, the farmer pleasantly asked for the bill. It was a big one, which he paid without asking for a

penny discount. After settling his account, he informed the doctor that a year from then he planned on taking another vacation and that his in-laws would once again be staying in his hospital. Then the threesome left town, he on his horse and the elderly couple following on foot.

Several More Doctor Stories

Years ago I read Dr. Hertzler's autobiography, the Dr. Hertzler who founded the clinic in Halstead, Kansas, back in the days before the automobile ousted the horse and carriage.

Dr. Hertzler says he had a patient who would call him at any hour of the day or night for the most trivial ailments. A headache was reason to awaken the doctor at two o'clock in the morning, who would tell him to take an aspirin and go back to sleep.

The day came when enough was enough and Dr. Hertzler had his revenge. It happens that he bought hay for his horse from this inconsiderate patient, so one night when he was up anyway, to do a delivery or something, he called the fellow up, at something like two o'clock, and told him he was running low on hay for his horse. Would he please bring him a load of hay in the morning?

Dr. Hertzler says the hay came, but it was the worst he ever saw in his life...

Then there is the one of the young doctor who hung out his shingle in a small town where everyone was on a first name basis—and highly suspicious of strangers. So during the first weeks business was very slow.

But soon it became apparent business was picking up. Often he would be seen hurrying to his buggy, black satchel in hand, and leaving town at a dead run. Four or five hours later he would return from the call.

Slowly the suspicious villagers began to have confidence in the young doctor who was constantly out on rural calls.

Many years later, he would chuckle about these "calls," which were actually fishing trips. But they did the trick. He caught both fish and patients in the same act.

Life in Brazil

The Wage Earner

In this little paper you read a lot of nice things about Brazil. There are those who are convinced I am sort of fanatical on the subject, prejudiced. Maybe they're right. And if they are, it brings a definite side benefit: I can criticize the negative aspects of life here and no one can accuse me of being anti-Brazil.

Possibly the most negative aspect of living in Brazil is the difficulty of making a living as a wage earner. It isn't that there aren't high paying jobs, as good as the best in N America, but they are scarce and are usually filled by young people with a degree. Many professions that in industrialized nations bring premium wages, here are kept on a paltry level—because they soil the hands and don't require a college degree.

In our area an experienced mason makes in the neighborhood of 25 US dollars a day. A *day*, not hour. His

helper probably won't make half that much.

A good mechanic working for VW or Ford may take home less than US\$500 at the end of the month.

The starting wage in many businesses is under a hundred dollars a month. To add insult to injury—or in this case, injury to insult—if the worker is a cashier, at the end of the shift if there is too much money in the till, the excess goes to the owner. But, if through a mistake, there isn't enough money, the worker must make up the difference. It isn't all that unusual for a cashier to work a whole month for nothing. In some establishments the cashier is personally responsible for all checks received. Any bouncers are deducted from his or her wages.

An unskilled farm hand, who works by the day, will probably take home around 10 dollars.

There aren't many job openings on the Colony. The majority of the families, in keeping with Mennonite tradition, do their own work. Those who do hire steady help definitely give their workers a better deal than they could get elsewhere. The wage in itself isn't outstanding, but the frosting comes after harvest in the form of a bonus. By N American standards (even with the bonus), the wage would seem ridiculously low, but I am amazed at the men, with good work habits and economics, who have gotten ahead and today are farming on their own.

Needless to say, not very many young men have this kind of opportunity, since there aren't a lot of jobs of this type available. So what do the rest do?

This has been a real problem, not

only for Brazilians, but for some Americans too. When a young man is struggling to get his fledging farm into production, what happens if the harvest was just good enough to cover payments and expenses, and there is no money for living expenses until the next harvest? In N America its possible to get a job and pull through. Not here.

What about the young man who is thinking about getting married and is making only two or three hundred US dollars a month? Incredibly, it can be done, but not without a strong determination and a good dose of humility to live a simple, no-frills life. Imagine what happens when the family begins to grow.

On both the Rio Verde and Boa Esperança colonies, this scene is beginning to change. You will remember that at different times we have mentioned that some of the brethren are becoming involved in earth moving. As often happens in a new venture of this type, it takes some time to build up a name. During this period work has been sporadic. But for both operators and workers, it has been an intense time of training, of learning to know the ropes.

Most of the work done so far has been subcontract work for a large company that picks up jobs in a number of states. While this obviously cuts back on profits, it does have a number of advantages during this initial stage.

Three of our Brazilian brethren are working for this parent company. All are making good wages and one, a married brother from the Rio Verde Congregation, has been promoted to foreman. Since most of the work is done away from home, they get all their

living expenses paid, including telephone calls. That means that their wages soon metamorphose in a mighty nice nest egg. Young men who apparently didn't have much of a chance in life to get ahead, now walk and talk with a new gleam in their eyes—a gleam of hope and confidence in the future.

Kade, the parent company under which our operators have been working, has landed a mammoth job in Sorriso, state of Mato Grosso, building a soybean crushing factory, I believe one of the largest in Brazil. Most of the available rigs from here have been moved to this new job. Men from both Rio Verde and Boa Esperança will be running these rigs.

Doubtlessly these men will move a lot of earth and we hope make good wages. More important, however, will be the opportunity to witness in a new area. We used to talk about mission work through colonization, but hopefully one of these days we can talk about mission work through earth moving. After all, that's how the mission in Mozambique got started.

This earth moving project is producing an entirely unexpected by-product, one that without a doubt will leave a sociological imprint on the story of the move to Brazil.

Through the years we have been hampered by the lack of a natural material common denominator between Americans and Brazilians. When truckers sit down together, they talk trucking, farmers talk farming, fish raisers talk fish, computer operators talk computers. But what were Americans and Brazilians supposed to talk about?

In the new earth moving business,

men aren't being hired because they're American, or Brazilian, or Canadian, but because they're qualified. Brazilians can (and some do) make better wages than Americans, and this because they have more experience and are worth more.

I suspect that this situation will do more toward building strong bridges between men and women of two different continents than anything we have ever done here.

Your Brazilian Sister Writes

by *Leila Ambrósio*

God Is Always Near

[Leila is the teenage daughter of Carlos Ambrósio, who recently had an article published in BN (See BN 107). She wrote this experience for our Mensageiro. Later she stopped by at work and I got some more interesting details, which have been included.]

Sometimes we get the impression that God has forgotten about us. But do you suppose He actually forgets His children? A mother may have many children, but never does she forget a single one of them. The same is true of God. His eyes are constantly on every one of his children. When we need Him the most, if we have faith all we have to do is reach out our hand and He is right there to deliver us.

I want to tell an experience that I had several years ago, while we were still living in Rio Verde.

We lived quite a ways from church and one evening just my older sister and I decided to go. We walked to the bus stop which was just one block from our house. While we were waiting, the bus went by—in the opposite direction—and we knew that shortly it would return and take us in the direction we wanted to go. Since this was a residential area, we were there alone.

While we were waiting, a man walked up. He was tall, dark, around 40 years old, and sort of shabbily dressed. His facial features were anything but pleasant. So far as we could tell, he wasn't drunk.

He walked right up to where my sister and I were waiting and demanded that we tell him who lived in a nearby house. We didn't know, and told him so.

That really sent the man into a rage. He began to swear and call us the most awful names. He threatened to kill us if we didn't tell him who lived in that house. He cursed us because we were Christians, he cursed the Bible and God himself.

Needless to say, we were scared. The only thing we could do was silently pray, which we did from the bottom of our hearts, asking Him to protect us.

Suddenly he turned and walked up to the front door of the house right in front of the bus stop, kicked in the door, and shouted to us that when he came back, he was going to kill us. I doubt that it was his house, because if it were, he wouldn't have had to kick in the door. Fortunately no one was at home, or there might have been a real fight.

We had the opportunity of running for our lives while he was in the house, but it seemed to us that this was a battle

between good and evil. If we would run and miss our bus, then we wouldn't be able to go to church, and that would be Satan's victory. So we prayed to God that He would give us courage to stand firm.

Moments later he came storming out of the house with a rusty knife in his hand. When he got near us, we saw something had changed. He was unable to see us! He lurched about, cursing and shouting. "Where are those two Christians who were out here just a minute ago? Where are they! If I could just get my hands on them, that would be their end!"

All the time we were standing right there in front of him. You can imagine the relief we felt when we saw our bus approaching. We were able to go to church, sure that Satan had been overcome. The victory was ours!

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

This & That

On July 2 the Rio Verde Congregation came to communion. The evangelists were Harold H Koehn, from Montezuma, KS, and Arlo Hibner, from the Monte Alegre Congregation.

The Dennis Kramer family from the Boa Esperança settlement spent a month here on the Colony. It may have started out as a vacation, but Dennis, a mason, together with his boys, ended up taking several jobs, which included putting facer brick on the addition made to the Monte Alegre School several years ago.

Several years ago a brother in the Rio Verde Congregation was killed in an accident. Now a convert who just finished doctrine class was also involved in an accident and killed. We tend to look on this type of an incident as a tragedy, but really it's the ultimate victory of a congregation to have prepared someone for this hour.

July 7-11 meetings were held in the Pirenópolis Congregation, with ministers Dean Mininger and Arlo Hibner as the evangelists. Pirenópolis is a historical town of some 25 thousand inhabitants, which receives a yearly visit from the president of Brazil. In spite of a staunchly Catholic culture, our little congregation, with its own minister and deacon, is doing very well. I have never heard of anyone visiting that congregation and leaving there down in the dumps. It isn't possible.

On July 16, Robert, son of Clifford & Naomi Warkentin, and Angela, daughter of Daniel & Betty Martin, were married at the Rio Verdinho Congregation.

David Warkentin from Cartwright was here for his cousin Robert's wedding. Marlys Wicke was here for her niece's wedding and to help Alma Penner move back to the US.

July 16 was also the funeral of the mother of Min. Antônio Oliveira, in Pirenópolis. Different ones from here traveled during the night to be there in time for the morning funeral. Myron Kramer, together with his family, was there for the funeral. Since they had spent several years there as missionaries, they were acquainted with Dona Chica. She was

one of those rare souls who was known and loved by the entire town. She belonged to a Pentecostal church, but was sympathetic toward our church. The funeral ended up being an ecumenical affair, almost a town holiday, in which representatives from the different churches, including the Catholic church, arose to give their eulogies. Myron gave a short talk in behalf of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite.

Milton & Cindy Loewen, Myron & Sheila Unruh and Ben & Laura Koehn spent over a week in Roraima looking at land. As near as I can read the sentiment of those interested, they feel there is real opportunity, but realize that because of distance, the initial group moving needs to be big enough to form a nucleus.

On July 19, there was a farewell at the Rio Verdinho social hall for Alma Penner.

We have at different times reported on Milton Loewen's dairy. I believe that most of the families from the Monte Alegre Congregation were his milk customers, as well as some from the Rio Verdinho Congregation, that is, until he sold just recently. Between farming and stock cattle, the dairy kept him on a pretty tight schedule.

Those of you readers who have lived here, maybe even some visitors, may remember "Casa das Louças," more commonly known as "Jonas' store," in Rio Verde, near the large Catholic church in the middle of town. This cluttered up place, with narrow aisles and bulging shelves, sold thousands of different items: pots and

pans, serving spoons, toys, gadgets, small appliances... It was a bit of an eerie experience to buy there. The items didn't have a price tag on them, which meant the customer had to ask the price of every item. So many of the prices they seemed to have in their heads, and that's the eerie part. I got the impression they would toss their first price out of the upstairs window, hoping the customer would bite. If he didn't they would slowly come down the stairs. Even so, when the customer finally said, "I'll take it," he didn't know if he had paid a just price, or still way too much. Of one thing he could be quite sure, it wouldn't be a bargain. Jonas, the founder, who died several years ago, was from one of the Balkan countries. He and his wife, together with their son Ernesto, and his wife, ran the store for over 30 years. The other day the store was totally destroyed by fire, apparently some appliance overheated. It was so hard on the old lady that she has been in and out of the hospital. Several weeks after the fire, Ernesto died. It was a sad ending for a store that for years was a landmark in Rio Verde.

Phil & Alfrieda Martin took Cristiane and Raquel (the Garcia girls) to see their dad in Catalão and spend the 30th on the mission in Mirassol, São Paulo.

The Tract Board: Paulo David, Calvin Hibner, Chris Stoltzfus, and the office superintendent, Clinton Unruh, spent July 29 and 30 in Pirenópolis. On the 29th tracts were handed out in town and the 30th, Sunday, they had a tract rally in church, with different

talks on the art of tract distribution. Dale Carnegie projected himself into fame with his *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Should an antithesis of this book ever be written, it would have to be called something like *How to Make Enemies and Infuriate People*. Obviously the author of such a work would have a limitless amount of material disposable to buttress his ideas. But to make it a bestseller, and thus turn himself into a natural target for vintage eggs and septic tomatoes each time he took to the streets, he could insert a subtitle like *Adjusting to Life Without Adjustments...* Now, switching gears, I read in the paper that Brazil has set up a school that that will turn out adjusters, better known as chiropractors in N America. Since the common people in this country have absolutely no idea what a *quioprático* is, they will have to be educated to their own needs, that is, shown that they are out of adjustment. This will, of course, come as a shock to some of the more simple folk who believe from the bottom of their heart there isn't a thing in the world the matter with them. However, once they have been enlightened to the fact that *everyone* is out of adjustment and taught to detect the subtle symptoms that go with this maladjustment, they will be able to find help. Knowing this is a very sensitive subject, I will, as editor of this little paper, refrain from any personal opinions. (For you Colony folks, NO, I don't know where the nearest *quioprático* has set up shop.)

Facts & Figures

Temperatures

High	32.1°C	90°F
Low	0.7°C	33°F
Av high	28.6°C	84°F
Av low	9.9°C	50°F

As you can see by the low temperature, we had some chilly weather, quite a little frost, especially along the rivers. Since we are getting toward the end of the dry season and most of the grass was dry anyways, the frost didn't do a lot of damage. Some banana plants were hit pretty bad. Farther south some of the coffee groves took a real beating. In the southernmost state of Rio Grande do Sul they had snow.

Rainfall

8 mm — 3/10 inches

Relative Humidity

Hi 67% — Low 33% — Av 47%

BN Tour

Another BN tour to Brazil is being organized for the beginning of January, 2001. Some of the options are:

A visit to the colony in Mato Grosso

A bus trip to Iguaçu Falls

A visit to the Pirenópolis Cong.

A tour of the local Perdiggão plant

An excursion by boat on the Amazon River, tremendously interesting, but quite expensive

A day touring São Paulo and Santos

A visit to Curitiba (which could be included in a visit to Iguaçu Falls

A day in Brasília, the capital of Brazil, really something that no one should miss (could be worked in with a visit to Pirenópolis)

If interested, contact Patrick Baize by phone or fax. 605 546 0244 and give him your suggestions as to which of the options you would be interested in. Since this takes a lot of organizing, the sooner you contact him, the better.

For those of you who have no relatives here, or know no one, we especially welcome you. When you leave you will not only have friends in Brazil, but relatives too.

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1307 21st Ave., Galva, KS 67443-8008
(Ph. 316-654-3487) (FAX: 316-654-3999)

Editor: Charles Becker
C.P. 35 75901-970 Rio Verde - GO - Brazil
TeleFax: (062) 613 9002 (home)
(062) 613 9008 (office)

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