

Brazil News



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Editorial

When We Forget

“I forgot.”

Two words. A grammatically complete and correct sentence. No ambiguities; no need to ask, “What do you mean?”

“I forgot.”

Sometimes these words are spoken with tears, with deep emotion, with repentance. Sometimes they are spoken matter-of-factly. Often, far too often, they are spoken blithely, with ill-contained satisfaction for having found a convenient loophole out of an irksome promise or responsibility.

“I forgot.”

Two little boys, brothers, are waiting for their dad at the front gate when he drives up from work. One of them is holding a wagon wheel. “Dad, the wheel came off of our little red wagon today. Do you suppose you can fix it?”

“Yes, I think so. Where is the wagon?”

“It’s out in the shop.”

Dad goes out to the shop with the boys and looks the wagon over. Smiling he says, “It won’t be hard to fix, but I will have to buy a little part in town. I’ll run to the hardware store tomorrow after work. Okay, boys?”

“Okay! Okay!”

The following day both boys are waiting for dad at the front gate again. They have been there almost an hour waiting.

“Hi, boys.”

“Hi, Dad.”

“How was school?”

“Okay...” The two little boys look up at him expectantly.

Sensing something is amiss, he smiles and asks, “You sure school was okay?”

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“School was okay...uh, did you bring the part for our wagon?”

“No I didn’t. I’m sorry, boys. I forgot. I’ll get it for you tomorrow...”

The following day the boys again wait at the gate. They’ve waited only 30 minutes this time. When dad sees them, his hand goes to his mouth, and he exclaims, “Boys, would you believe that I forgot to stop at the hardware again? I’ll be sure and stop tomorrow”

The next day the boys silently trudge to the gate, a few minutes before he is expected home. “This time he comes rushing through the gate, hardly seeing the boys. He has some urgent business to attend to.

The boys look at each other. That night after supper one of them timidly asks, “Dad, you didn’t remember to go to the hardware store, did you?”

“No,” he says, “I had some problems to see to and ended up forgetting. One of these days I’ll get that wagon fixed for you.”

The next day no one is waiting for dad at the front gate.

Several months later when the handlebar breaks on their tricycle, they throw the handlebar, and the tricycle, on top of the broken wagon. That’s what junk piles are for.

The young boys grow up and go on their own. They frequently have problems and when counseled to take their burdens to the Lord, they agree it would be a good thing to do, but silently they ask, “What for?”

One of our local doctors tells of an incident that occurred shortly after he graduated from medical school, now a married man with a small child. As he tells it: “One day the little girl choked on something. I grabbed her and tried to stick my finger down her throat.” Here he demonstrates how he did it. “My wife saw what was happening. She grabbed that child from me, turned it over and gave it a sharp rap on the back, dislodging the object from it’s throat.” The moment he saw his wife go into action, his common sense, and professional training came back to him, and he realized his folly. He finishes his story with a humorless, self-deprecating laugh, “I forgot I was a doctor.”

Sometimes we forget we’re a husband. Or a wife. When we stand before God and the assembled witnesses on the day of our wedding, we join hands and make some solemn promises. We promise to love and care.

We make out quite well on this for the first month, or months, because it’s about all we can think about. But time goes on. A year later, ten years, or fifty years, one measure of success of a marriage is the amount of times “I forgot” is, or rather *isn’t*, heard in the home.

When we love, it’s hard to forget. When we care, we seldom forget.

Not only do husband and wife need to remember. This quality must be instilled in the children as well. One good indicator of how parents are faring in the nurture and admonition of their children is the amount of times they, the children, say, “I forgot.” The second indicator is how parents react when their child says, “I forgot.”

We insert here that to forget is human and by no means are we suggesting that we can rise above ever forgetting. We are talking about those—please notice this carefully—for whom forgetting has become a way of life. A crutch. A...well...a dishonesty.

Chores. All children should have chores of some kind, something that needs to be done daily. Animals to care for, trash to take out, a porch or sidewalk to sweep... Because of the importance of chores, one can't help but believe they were instituted by the Lord Almighty Himself. Chores are the lab in which parents have the setting to help their children develop strong character.

Mother: "Johnny, did you take care of the ducks?"

Johnny: "No."

Mother: "Why not?"

Johnny: "Because I forgot."

Mother: "Don't you know those poor duckies will die if you don't take care of them?"

Johnny doesn't answer. He's been through this dialog, with its variations, hundreds of times, or so it seems. He trudges over to the duck pen and takes care of the ducks.

Mother sighs and in her personal devotions asks the Lord to give her patience to raise her family. That's the last thing on earth she needs. What she needs is Godly wisdom to see what she is doing to her child. She needs to spend time on her knees repenting. The chances of a child who is permitted to forget everyday growing up to be a "remembering" adult are slim indeed.

When forgetting becomes a way of life, forgetting is sin. Parents who permit their children to systematically forget are teaching them to sin.

When we begin listing the evils and temptations of modern living, we come up with an impressive list. So impressive, that we *forget* the age-old evil of forgetting.

Forgetting is sin, because most forgetting is tainted with dishonesty or disobedience, and often both. This is also true in children. We don't usually forget that which we enjoy doing. When we do forget something which we enjoy doing or hoped to do, our way of saying "I forgot" is entirely different than when we forget something we didn't want to do in the first place.

Forgetting is an art that can be developed to a high degree, even by six-year olds. It is a self-serving, self-righteous art that can turn the offender into an instant martyr when punished or reprimanded for having forgotten. Indeed, to say "I forgot" becomes similar to the transgression for which Jesus severely upbraided the scribes and Pharisees, when they would permit children who said, "It is a gift," (read Matthew 15:5) to go free of punishment for disobedience.

"I forgot" doesn't make wrong right, it doesn't justify sin, it doesn't build character, it doesn't gender confidence in others.

The damage done by "I forgot" is far greater than we suspect. We are told that in some underdeveloped nations, up to half of all grain in storage is destroyed by rodents. Like the little foxes, it doesn't seem possible that rats could do so much damage.

Each "I forgot" is a rat. How many rats does it take to destroy the spiritual grain of one household? Of one congregation? Of the church?

Answer the following questions in all honesty. In the period of one month...

How many times do you forget to have family worship in the morning? (Include the times in which, when you remember, it's too late.)

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How many times do you forget your personal devotions?

How many times do you promise your spouse you will do something, but end up forgetting?

Ditto for your children?

How many times do you borrow something and forget to return it?

How many times do you agree to be at a certain place at a given time and you forget?

How often does the Lord clearly ask you to visit someone, you say, "Yes Lord, I will go," and forget?

How often do you feel impressed to write someone a letter, or do a deed of kindness, but end up forgetting?

How often do you promise your child "The next time you do that you'll have to be punished," and he does it and you forget to punish him?

How often do you tell your child "If you keep my shop nice and clean for me, I'll buy you a gift," and he does, but you never remember to make your promise good?

How often do you ask your local parts dealer to order a part for you, and then forget to go in and pick it up?

How often do you forget to pay your bills?

How often do you forget that you forgot?

Now, folks, do a few mental calculations and see if you can get an idea of what percentage of your spiritual grain is being consumed by rats each month. Take into consideration that each time you forget something, *someone* is suffering because of your dishonesty or disobedience. You may never know it. You may, very likely will, see the negative results of this in later life, but not realize that what you are seeing is the fruit of your forgetting.

"I forgot."

It's so easy to say. It's so comforting. It's such an easy way out. But each time you say "I forgot," you are turning one more rat loose in your life, in the life of your family, in your congregation, and in your community.

The doctor almost lost his daughter because he forgot he was a doctor. We think that strange; we say, "What a doctor!" But how many times do we forget we are a Christian? And we don't see anything strange about it.

The work we have done on our car at a local mechanic shop proves faulty, but when we go back to explain what has happened, the mechanic assumes no responsibility. We forget we're a Christian and tell the man things that no Christian should ever say.

While traveling we spend the night in a motel. We forget we're a Christian and stay up until the wee hours watching TV (just to see what's on the news).

When selling a piece of equipment, it's so easy to forget we are a Christian and tell only half the truth. We say that's business, yet if someone treats us that way, we think it's terrible.

When in a strange city, we visit the mall and forget we're a Christian; we visit stores in which we wouldn't consider being seen in our home town.

Probably there is no place we more often forget we're a Christian than in our own home.

If the doctor would have lost his little daughter, he would probably have given up his medical career. Yet we forget we're a Christian time and time again, and think very little of it.

If you feel we have been overbearing in our remarks about forgetting, if you still believe that forgetting isn't sin, then imagine yourself all alone, falling... falling through dense billows of black flames. After what seems like thousands of years you hear a scream. During brief moments (there will be no "brief moments" in eternity, but how else do you say it?) you are falling within shouting distance of another lost soul. You shout, "Why are you in this Godforsaken place?"

He answers, "I refused to be a Christian and lived according to the flesh. Weren't you a Christian either?"

You reply, "I was a Christian all my life, but I forgot..."

The other lost soul is now out of earshot, but as you continue spiraling down into the bottomless pit, you have an entire eternity before you to cry out, "I forgot I was a Christian...I forgot..." ▲

Culture

Can Any Good Thing Come Out of Latin America?

Latin America, made up of South and Central America, is an enormous mass of land, reaching from Mexico to the tip of Argentina, near Antarctica, plus a number of islands, including Castro's Cuba. With a few exceptions, these countries were colonized by Spain and Portugal.

In spite of its fabulous natural resources and enormous potential for development, never has a Latin American country emerged as a true leader or made a lasting contribution to the global order of nations. Because of this we unconsciously tend to place limitations on what we can expect of the church in Latin America. At the best we see a church of Pigmy Christians, always praying with their faces turned toward North Amecca.

When we take into consideration that most of Latin America was colonized before or during the time the Pilgrims arrived in N America, how do we explain the inability of at least a few of the nations to assume a dominant world role?

It isn't surprising that we wonder if any good thing can come out of Latin America.

Inevitably, whatever it is that keeps Latins from excelling on the world scene will also have an influence on the establishing of the church in these countries. To gain a better understanding of the Latin culture and mentality, we will listen to what Carlos Alberto Montaner has to say in his interview with VEJA Magazine.

Montaner was born in Cuba and at 18 was condemned to 18 years in prison for having organized a student strike. Rather than rot away in prison, he fled to the US, and then to Spain, where he now lives in Madrid. An acid critic of Latin American complacency, Montaner, a Latin himself, throws his rocks from the inside out.

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VEJA: Why is Latin America the most underdeveloped continent, with exception of Africa?

Montaner: We find the most important reason in our own history. We got our distorted economic vision, our backward culture and education from Portugal and Spain, the European powers that created Latin America. Portugal and Spain, the most scientifically and technologically backward countries of Europe, integrated their worst characteristics into their colonies. Tragically, the culture which we inherited from them is static [stagnant], while the others from central Europe and the Anglo-Saxons, look to the future and always change for the better. So while we look to the past, other nations look to the future.

VEJA: So you would say that culturally Latin America is very backward?

Montaner: We never did have the vision that progress should mean comfort for the masses. We are a static culture, convinced that we should share wealth, and not that wealth should constantly be created. This static way of seeing wealth is responsible for our cultural poverty.

VEJA: But Latin America is part of the western world.

Montaner: That's the paradox of Latin America. In spite of being part of the western world, it continues to be the poor section of town. This is because it looks for eccentric solutions to problems, instead of trying to fit into the main body. Spain and Portugal always were eccentric powers. It wasn't until they decided to do as other western powers that they began to close the gap with the rest of Europe. This is what Latin America has to do....

Again we ask, spiritually can any good thing come out of Latin America? Is it capable of producing sound, stable leaders? In the different countries where the church is represented, is there potential, not merely for successful mission posts or tottering indigenous congregations, but for a complex of autonomous congregations that work together and propagate without a bunch of tubes and I.Vs. bringing in outside nourishment, that aren't constantly under the care of foreign physicians?

We say that after all what we are interested in is saving souls. So true. Young parents are interested in having children, but they also want to see their them grow up and mature. And establish their own homes. A gray-haired couple with 30 year old children the size of three year olds running around the house would hardly be the fulfillment of their original dream.

Can any good thing come out of Latin America? Do Latins have potential for growth, to mature and to produce solid, stable leaders? To propagate?

In spite of all the progress we can proclaim, there remains that gnawing question: Do Latin Americans have potential to assume a responsible place in the body, to carry their part of the load?

We N Americans have been raised to be decisive. We don't wait for the alarm to ring to jump on the fire truck. We see smoke and jump on the truck. And if there is no truck, we grab a wet sack and head out. To us the important thing is to put out the fire, not to get authorization from someone to put out a fire.

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That is the negative legacy which Latin America received from Spain and Portugal. The ruling class (the few) expected the serving class (the masses) to take—not give—orders. Whether we like it or not, this characteristic affects church development.

So the answer is no, Latin Americans will never carry their own weight?

We have mentioned before, and now repeat, that increasingly business and industry are assuming the functions once attributed only to government. Speaking now of Brazil, this has a tremendously healthy effect on the nation.

Let's take a simple example. Brazil has a minimum wage of a little over a hundred dollars a month. The government knows no one can survive on such a wage. So these low wage earners are subsidized by government handouts (which translate into votes at election time). Business, big business, multinational companies, know that anyone earning a minimum wage is going to be worthless, even as a floor sweeper. So they pay a decent wage and give a number of fringe benefits that make it possible for the worker to have a star of hope in life. It makes all the difference. Men working in this environment become decisive. They become leaders.

This new mentality, which is also present in Brazilian big business, has an explanation. Many of the top echelon have gotten their education abroad: Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Cambridge... These are the men who are doing what politicians all too often don't do. They are turning out leaders, giving hope to the nation.

Can a strong church come out of Latin America? It will depend on whether we foreigners assume the role of politicians or executives. Let's notice:

Politicians (the few) prefer a low wage because of the subservience it creates over the masses. It limits development, but assures power.

The executive, on the other hand, understands that without development, without results, *he is out of a job*. He may be the president, the chairman of the board, but unlike the politician, his security, his power, is directly dependent on what his men produce. So he needs happy men, well-paid men, decisive men. He needs men who can rise through the ranks and, who knows, someday also be an executive.

There is positively no lack of talent in Latin America. Only a lack of incentive. But with democracy, there can be capitalism; with capitalism there can be big business; with big business there can be a strong middle class, and with a strong middle class there will *always* be a strong nation.

Can a strong church come out of Latin America?

Yes. But only if we act like businessmen and not like politicians. We must realize that the growth of the church depends on them just as much as it does on us. If we, like the politician, keep them on a minimum wage, but give them an occasional handout to coax a little more growth out of them, we've lost it.

We need middle class Christians in the church. We need middle class Christians in the Latin American church. For this to happen we must hire them in for a good wage *and demand results*. No spiritual handouts.

Our Brazilian brethren at times complain that they are subjected to a less rigid

discipline than the Americans. They resent this. By expecting less from them, and tolerating more, we are getting less. That's the long and the short of it.

What about those who haven't been raised to be decisive? Do we hope we can somehow nurse them along and come up with a few survivors?

Of course not.

Perdigão, that has set up the large chicken/hog operation in the Rio Verde area, has sent dozens, maybe hundreds, of workers to their factories in other states to learn their jobs. As the factory goes into operation here, these same men and women will be expected to show results. If they don't, they won't be put on a minimum wage, given an occasional handout, and then permitted to work at 20 percent of their potential. Perdigão will, and must, demand maximum results from all their workers.

As Montaner show us, Latin America is still suffering from the negative influence of Spain and Portugal. So is the church. But if there is hope for the nation, there has to be hope for the church. What it will take is some real Jerusalem influence. The formula is: Go ye therefore into Latin America and hire men and women, train them for the work which they must do, pay them a proper wage, and then demand results.

Can any good thing come out of Latin America?

I am totally convinced that it is possible to one day have a chain of solid congregations in Latin America, in spite of its negative culture. I am also convinced if this church doesn't develop, we, the torch bearers, will carry much of the blame, in spite of our superior culture. ▲

Remembering Out Loud

Banks

You folks who have been getting this little paper for a while will have discovered that banks occupy a special place in the lives of people living in Brazil. This truth really sinks in when I go into a bank in N America.

Banks in N America, I have found, have all the solemnity of a funeral parlor. People talk in hushed tones and smile softly. Even the strategically placed bouquets conjure visions of someone lying in state just inside one of the paneled side rooms. (It's not hard to understand why drive-thru windows are so popular.)

The most amazing thing about banks in N America is that they're empty. That's right. Hardly any visible customers. When I walk into my bank in McPherson often as not I'm the only customer. So real silently I head up to one of the windows and as quietly as possible state my business. Noiselessly the teller does what needs to be done and in a minute or two I soundlessly head for the door, feeling like surely I must be one of the last of the Mohicans in that establishment.

Whenever you folks from N America travel to Brazil, you must visit one of our banks. The first thing you will notice is that there is nothing funeral-homish about our

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financial institutions. They're noisy. They're full of people. They're invigorating, an excellent remedy for folks suffering from low blood pressure.

Yes, I'll explain...

A Brazilian bank is where you meet your friends, especially those that you sort of lose contact with through the years. The other day in the Banco Itaú, I saw my old friend Alfredo Guerra. He greets me in French and I respond in English. Then we shake hands, pat each other on the back—and switch to Portuguese. People all over town know Alfredo only by his nickname, Guerrinho. I said, “Guerrinho, that teller called you ‘Alfredo.’ Doesn’t he know your name is Guerrinho?” He leaned my way and in a conspiratorial voice, real low-like (just like they talk in US banks), he said, “That guy doesn’t know that Alfredo is just my nickname and that my real name is Guerrinho.” Then he laughed uproariously at his clever little joke. Such behavior, I can’t help but reflecting, would hardly fit into the austere atmosphere of an American institution.

A Brazilian bank is where you find out what is happening in town and in the municipality. How many conversations here on the Colony don’t start with the words, “I was in the bank the other day...”?

A Brazilian bank is where farmers and ranchers meet and compare notes. It is where they find out what hogs and steers are selling for. It is where they find out about a used tractor that is for sale.

A Brazilian bank is where people do business. Years ago we had a fellow in town with the nickname of Baron. (I have no idea what his real name was.) He was a large fellow with a protruding belly (if I’m not mistaken, due to a massive rupture). He always wore his shirt out, and that for several reasons. First of all, I doubt if he could have kept it tucked in very long. Secondly, he dealt in firearms, which he carried stuck in his waistband, under his shirt, naturally. His business was totally illegal, but he was such a jolly good fellow that apparently the authorities didn’t make him any trouble. I remember seeing Baron in line in the Banco do Brasil pulling pistols out from under his shirt and showing them to customers. I might add that today, with new security restrictions in banks, this particular marketing procedure would no longer be seen with such benevolent eyes. It would be interesting to know how many farms, how many tractors and implements have been sold in our local banks in the last several decades.

A Brazilian bank has workers. They are carefully selected and as a rule very efficient. I remember one especially, who some 15 years worked in the old downtown Banco Itaú agency. She had the nickname of *Cigana*—Gypsy—for some reason. Each morning she would be given a list of all their customers whose account had “blown up” (been overdrawn). Many of these were businessmen who habitually blew up their accounts, so she knew all of their phone numbers by heart. Never in my life have I seen anyone who could talk with more people in less time than Cigana. Needless to say, the conversations, or rather monologues, were short: “João, your account is overdrawn a thousand and fifty cruzeiros.” Plink. It wasn’t necessary to identify herself nor from which bank she was. By the time João hung up his phone, she was dialing the next victim.

A Brazilian bank has guards, at least two. One near the entrance and another at the far end, up in a bulletproof cubicle. As a rule these guards are congenial fellows and shaking hands with them and exchanging a few pleasantries is part of a visit to the bank. The guards aren't there only for decoration. Robberies aren't all that unusual. According to the paper, there have been some 70 robberies in the state of Goiás so far this year. Not everyone enjoys being in on a bank robbery. Apparently Cigana does. They say that when the Banco Itaú was robbed, the robbers had everyone lying on the floor, including Cigana, who apparently saw enough humor in the situation to where she got the giggles... (She today is one of the managers in an agency of the Banco Itaú in Ribeirão Preto, in the state of São Paulo.)

A Brazilian bank is where you meet people with problems. It's where you hear: "Did you know that I lost my dad a month ago?" "My wife is in the hospital. She isn't doing so well." "I had to sell my place...I cosigned for a fellow and he didn't pay up..." "My son was in a bad accident. He lost a leg..."

A Brazilian bank is where you get invited to a friend's wedding. It's where you find out there is going to be a meeting at the local Coop on a new kind of herbicide. It's where farmers discuss the pros and cons of planting a second crop after the main crop has been harvested, and which seed is best.

A Brazilian bank is where you *used to* get a cup of *cafézinho*. As our pace of living increases, this beautiful little custom is fading away.

That's a Brazilian bank. An enchanting place. Needless to say, not everyone will agree with this opinion, but they are the losers if they can't enjoy themselves in a bank.

Oh yes, I might mention that Brazilian banks are also financial institutions, where money is deposited, loans are made, etc. ▲

An Old Story

By Frank W. Miles

Out of the Jaws of Death

Some years ago, how many is not material, I took passage on board a large steamer bound from Australia to London.

We were about ten days out of Melbourne when, being an indifferent sailor, I began to feel the effects of the exceptionally rough sea which seemed determined, if it would not bar our passage, at least to make it uncomfortable. After a few days I got so ill that the ship's doctor had to be called, and he surprised me by informing me that I was suffering from a slight attack of brain fever. I thought at the time that if what I felt was a *slight* attack, I certainly had no desire to know how a bad attack would feel, and I shuddered at the thought of getting worse. I was now confined to my bunk. The night following was a very stormy one, and the eerie whistling and roaring of the wind and the pitching and rolling of the ship in the heavy sea excited my fevered imagination

with countless visions of the spirits of the vast deep. Under these circumstances I went rapidly from bad to worse.

The doctor had plenty to do that journey, I fancy, for I was not the only one who claimed his attention. In the next bunk to mine was an old fellow, who, like myself, was returning from the land of the southern cross, and whose condition was even worse than my own. His story is a sad one. Having, as the saying goes, made his pile in the colonies, Henderson, for that was his name, intended to return to England to end his days. But destiny was against him, and he never reached home again. On the fourth day out from Melbourne he met with a somewhat singular accident.

He was sitting on the upper deck smoking when hearing a confused noise as of an altercation arising from the lower part of the ship, he ran to the side to ascertain the cause. I was on the upper deck at the time and saw his action. I naturally followed him, but before I could reach him he had turned a complete somersault over the rail and fallen to the lower deck. I lost no time in rushing down to his assistance, only to find the poor old fellow altogether unconscious. I turned to call for help, but before I could move two seamen ran up, closely followed by Dr. Kimber (the ship's doctor), who had seen the accident, and came to render all the help he could to the unfortunate victim. It was found that both the lower limbs had been badly fractured, in fact, the left leg was so badly broken that amputation had to be decided upon.

When a week later my own illness began to trouble me, the horror of the old man's accident seemed to haunt me more fully. I seemed to be in Henderson's place; my hopes of reaching home again safely, being as it were, entirely shattered. Then it was that my health completely broke down and I went straight off to bed. After Dr. Kimber had seen Henderson in the next bunk, I called him to me and asked his advice, telling him my symptoms and so forth. Then it was that he told me of that slight attack, the slightness of which as I have already intimated, had not previously struck me. My head felt like a boiling whirlpool, and what with the splashing of the water outside and the groaning of my dilapidated fellow-sufferer, I felt that were I to lose consciousness, were I to die, or to sleep, or anything that would give me the silence I craved for, I should not care what that silence involved. But no, neither of these possibilities came to my relief and I lay for hours in excruciating pain; I lay like dead for two days without food—I could not take any, my very jaws refused to move.

If ever I was near to death it was then. The third day showed no improvement, in fact the condition I was now in was just this: I lay on my back as still as a marble monument; I couldn't speak, eat or move a muscle. The only sense I seemed to be possessed of was that of sight. Not much good that in the dark, for I had no light. No one seemed to come near me—I wasn't entertaining enough, I suppose; but I could not tell if any one was there or not as I could not move my head to look. All I could do was to gaze at the roof above me and await developments.

These were not long in coming. Something startling happened quite soon enough. I heard some one come into the cabin; he brought a light with him. At first I thought it was the doctor, but I was mistaken, for a rough voice exclaimed:

“Now! My hearty, I want to git this ’ere job over as soon as I can,” and then reflectively, “I ’opes as ’ow I’ve made the sack large enough.” I wondered what the fellow was driving at and who he could be, but of course it was impossible for me to ask him, or to ascertain in any other manner. Slowly but surely he was covering me with something; what it was I couldn’t tell, but presently when he passed it over my face I could see it was a sack, doubtless the one he had referred to. He then left me, and I laid there for what seemed to be a year, wondering what on earth I was tied up in a sack for. After a time two people came to the door of the cabin carrying something, which they set down outside. “Better leave it outside and ’oist ’im on to it,” said one of the visitors. Then it began to dawn upon me that I was supposed to be a corpse, and that I had been shrouded and was now about to be cast overboard to a watery grave. All my attempts to move, to kick, to scream, or do anything to attract attention were to no purpose, and I was put upon a bier and carried along the deck without the slightest protest on my part. I was then set down, and to intensify my horror I heard the well-known words of the burial service being read over me and I felt that my end could not now be far off. Consciousness then completely left me and I knew no more. When I awoke to consciousness I was again lying in a bunk. I tried to move my head, and to my delight it moved, although very weakly.

The captain’s wife was sitting by my side and she immediately gave me a stimulant, forbidding me to talk. I slept, awoke refreshed, and gradually the doctor and Mrs. “Captain” nursed me back to health, but it was a long while before I could leave my bunk; and when I did the first thing I did was to call on Dr. Kimber and ask him for an explanation. He told me that Henderson had succumbed to his injuries, and in the ordinary course of things, the ship’s carpenter was sent to shroud him. Never having seen either of us before, and finding me as good as dead, Chips came to the conclusion that I was the corpse, shrouded me, and sent for two seamen to carry me out for burial. The doctor had discovered the mistake on coming to my bunk to see me, as he had done three times a day for some time past, though I had never known it. Fortunately for me he was just in time to stop the funeral. I need hardly say the experience is never like to fade from my memory. I never see the sea but I shudder. ▲

A Brazilian Story

By Mário de Moraes

The Porcelain Doll

[While pawn shops do exist in Brazil, it is a federal bank, the Caixa Econômica Federal, present in most larger cities, that has a department specialized in appraising items to be pawned as guaranty for a loan. Interestingly, instead of talking about putting something in hock, here they say it is being put on the prego—nail; this because pawn shops used to have a lot of nails driven into the walls where pawned objects were stored until redeemed or sold for nonpayment of the loan.]

Huberto Montano, who used to work in the Caixa Econômica Federal bank, told me some of his experiences in the “pawn” department. The first one is funny, the second, sad.

One day a Portuguese came in with a tray which he wanted to give as security for a small loan. It was a cheap tray, made of thin tin, which a beer company gave to its customers. When the fellow was told that the tray had no value as security, he looked so downcast that the fellows who worked that department decided to pass the hat among themselves and give the money to the man as a present.

When the Portuguese received the 20 cruzeiros the men had collected, he didn't understand it was a present. He was overheard remarking to another customer, “Can you imagine! I couldn't find a soul that would give me a wooden nickel for that tray, and here if the Caixa Econômico didn't assess it at 20 cruzeiros....”

The next story that Montano told me is entirely different.

A man came in needing a loan. The fellow who took care of him noticed he was very distraught. Even though he tried to hide them, tears were running down his face. The man placed a box on the counter, which the worker opened. In it was a beautiful porcelain doll. After wiping his eyes with the sleeve of his jacket, the man explained, “This belongs to my little girl, but today she needs the money more than the doll.”

The doll was appraised and the money handed to the man, who with rapid strides left the bank.

From his desk the supervisor took in the entire scene. Many years of experiences had made him a good judge of human nature. So once the man had left, he asked to see the porcelain doll. He looked at it at length, and suddenly made a decision, even though it was against bank rules.

Calling one of his workers, he said, “I want you to take this doll back to the owner. Tell him his loan is paid off.”

A little while later the man was back and in a voice that shook with emotion told his story in a few words:

“...Chief, they live in a real poor house. The little girl, the doll's owner, is sick. Really sick. The money her dad got for the doll was spent on medications. He has spent absolutely everything they have on meds. Chief, you should have seen that little girl's eyes when I handed her the doll...” He ended his story by saying, “Chief, the only reason I didn't break down and cry is that men aren't supposed to cry...” ▲

This & That

The earthmoving project in Sorriso, Mato Grosso is gaining momentum. Those now working there are: Fernando Soares, Edinei Alves (and family), André Passos, Evandre Alves, Richard Kramer, José Luiz Carvalho (and family), Dave Kramer (and family), Márcio Ambrósio, Elfrain Dias, Kevin Hibner, Carlos Becker (and family), Lawrence Kramer. They are living on an old farmstead, having converted sheds and

other outbuildings into living quarters. Joetta Burns is the school teacher with a total of two students.

On August 4 everyone was invited to Edna Loewen's place for a weiner roast and an evening of singing.

August 9 was the Monte Alegre School enrollment and grocery shower for the teachers who are living in the house formerly owned by Sid Schmidt. Classes began on the 14th. The teachers are: Velda Loewen, Adriana Soares, Jessica Dirks, Arlete Arantes, Gisele Sperb, Michele Ismael. Interestingly, Adriana Soares will go down in Colony history as the first Brazilian to teach English (3rd and 4th grades) to American students. There are a total of 49 students in school this year.

Lisa, daughter of Robert & Connie Jantz from Moundridge, spent several days on the Colony before proceeding to the Patos mission, where she will be teaching the missionaries' children.

Micah Doerksen from Oklahoma is spending some time on the Colony, living with Elias & Colleen Stoltzfus.

Ministers Dean Mininger and Arlo Hibner, and deacon John Unruh were to the Boa Esperança Congregation for meetings, which ended with communion.

Rio Verdinho School enrollment was on the 16th and classes began on the 21st. The teachers are: Wendy Penner, Wanda Schultz, Luciene Rosa, Barbra Dirks. They are living in the former Daniel Martin Sr. house. There are a total of 21 students studying this year.

On the 25th there was a general school meeting for the three local congregations at the Monte Alegre church concerning the registration of our schools.

It appears our rainy season may start early this year. When rain begins pouring out of the clouds, seed corn also begins pouring out of the planters as farmers rush back and forth in their fields. The earlier the corn is planted, the better the chances of getting a second crop after it is harvested.

We reported in the last BN that Ministers Harold H. Koehn and Arlo Hibner held meetings in the town church. Wrong. It was Harold Koehn and Richard Mininger.

Why sell or get rid of a good milk cow? That is how VW apparently feels about their bus, better known as a Kombi, here in Brazil. Basically it is the same model that was being sold here 40 years ago. Just recently it received a sliding door (something that the Germans began installing over 30 years ago). Anybody that has any idea of what it takes to develop a new model car, tractor, or whatever, knows that the cost many times is astronomical, which explains why the Brazilian Kombi is such a good milk cow. In the early days of the Colony so many of the brethren owned Kombies that it was suggested maybe we should be called the Kombi brethren. The in-thing now is to buy a Besta made by Korean Kia Motor Company. The Besta is a civilized Kombi that hauls people in air-conditioned comfort. They're nice, but you have to invest in a tuning fork to buy one (to be able to get the right pitch on the "Dough, Re, Mi" song).

I just love to write about McDonalds. They're sort of up the crick here in Brazil. Eighty

percent of their Brazilian franchisees report they are having tough sliding. According to EXAME Magazine, to have a franchise to a McDonalds restaurant is no longer a guarantee to success. There are a number of reasons for their problems: The initial investment is half a million bucks, which usually is financed and payable in US dollars. Seventy-six percent of the franchisees got into the business after January 98, which means they got caught in the mega-devaluation of the real, which is really a mess (as some on the Colony who bought tractors with dollar payment can testify). One of the big gripes of the franchisees is that all too often they end up competing with McDonalds. In their effort to dominate the market (and keep competition out), areas are saturated with restaurants. Needless to say, the pioneer franchisees don't appreciate this.

I just now received a most interesting fax from Monte Unruh. Clipped from the Christian Science Monitor, it says that Brazil is going to outlaw foreign words from the Portuguese language. This, of course, is an utter impossibility in a democratic society. About the most that *could* happen would be a prohibition on foreign words in official government documents (which no one wants to read anyway). It's true that middle class Brazilians liberally marinate their speech with English words. And so what? It is exactly this sort of mixture that has made American English a great language. The French successfully legislated foreign terms out of their language many years ago. And what do they have? A "pure" language in which the world isn't the slightest bit interested. How many schools teach French as a subject anymore? An American linguist recently predicted that Portuguese and Spanish will eventually merge. Unlikely. If for no other reason than that Latin American countries don't get along well enough to do such a thing. Monte ended his little note to me with "Obrigado y boa noite." Great, except that "y" is Spanish. Portuguese is "e". But then, that's what we're talking about, mixing languages. A point well made...

The church in town was built next to a large *praça*—square, which unfortunately has become so noisy that recently, several evening services had to be called off because of political gatherings.