

Brazil News



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Editorial

The Price of an Error

When inserted into the spectrum of world history, the reign of the typewriter was short. Invented in 1828 by William Austin Burt, this first typographer was a wooden machine with a metal wheel on which type had been mounted. The operator of this machine selected the desired letter by rotating the wheel with a crank and then pulling a lever to bring it in contact with the paper. The print was of fairly good quality, but it was still as fast or faster to write with a quill. And more personal.

During the next several decades, scores of typographers were produced with equally dismal results. Significant progress was made with the invention of the platen, by which the paper advanced through the machine instead of the machine crawling over the paper being printed.

In 1872 Christopher Latham Sholes, together with two inventor friends, Carlos Glidden and S.W. Soule produced the prototype of a machine, called a Type-Writer, that bore just a slight resemblance to what we today know as a typewriter.

Because of its primitive design, keys struck returned to their mooring so slowly that they would often jam with the next key struck. In a dubious show of ingenuity, Sholes “solved” this problem by inventing the QUERTY keyboard—which we use to this day.

The logic behind this keyboard is that if you can’t increase the speed of the machine, then slow down the typist. So it was that Sholes carefully arranged the alphabet on his Type-Writer in the most inconvenient way possible.

It wasn’t until Philo Remington, the legendary gun manufacturer, became interested in Type-Writers and decided to mass produce a thousand units that things began to move in the right direction, that is, after Mark Twain bought one and gave these machines a certain credibility.

By no means were the problems all solved. To begin with, a new Type-Writer cost \$125, which in today’s currency would be sufficient to purchase a new car. Secondly,

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and incredibly, the actual printing was done on the backside of the platen, meaning that the typist could not check for mistakes until the paper was removed from the machine. Finally, many people were insulted when receiving an impersonal, mechanical correspondence. The public wasn't quite ready to assimilate such a gadget. Even the US Congress refused to review typewritten petitions.

In 1896 the Underwood company solved the problem of backside typing. Their sales pitch: "You are right side up; why write upside down?"

At this point not only was machine design a crucial issue, but also typing technique. Typing instructors encouraged their students to develop their own personalized technique, using two fingers, or a maximum of four.

In 1906 the subsequently famous Royal typewriters appeared on the market. By 1910 over two million typewriters had been sold in the United States. Touch typing using all ten fingers was introduced. The manual typewriter came of age.

In 1933 IBM introduced the first electric typewriters. Loud and crude, they were nevertheless a status symbol. Portables became the rage. The market was flooded with machines ranging from tinny to state-of-the-art.

But they all had one thing in common. Error correction was a tedious, time-consuming—and sometimes infuriating—process.

For the benefit of non-typing readers and for those who were born too late to have their names inscribed in the roster of typographical martyrs, we make a few explanations.

Kinds of errors:

Substitution—The wrong key is struck and consequently the wrong letter is printed, e.g. horsw.

Transposition—The reversal of two consecutive letters, e.g. hosre.

Doubled—A single character is typed twice, e.g. hoorse.

Dropped—A letter is omitted, e.g. hrse.

Off home row—All the fingers on one or both hands stray vertically or laterally and, in spite of going through the proper motions, consistently strike the wrong keys. Assuming that the right hand has moved up one row, the phrase, "The horse runs fast," would come out as, "Tye y9rse r7hs fast!" Depending on the importance and urgency of the document, symptoms of apoplexy may be detected in the typist when the mistake is discovered.

Omission of words, lines, sentences or paragraphs—Self-explanatory. More symptoms of apoplexy.

All the errors described have something in common: they must be corrected.

How to correct an error on a manual typewriter:

Step one—Move carriage to extreme left or right so that the error is positioned to the side of the body of the machine.

Step two—With an appropriate eraser, erase the incorrect letter(s). Since the carriage has been moved to the side, the eraser crumbs drop on the table.

Step three—With the brush located at the other end of the eraser, brush off any crumbs which may have remained on the paper.

Step four—(Optional) Smooth the erased area with fingernail surface. Otherwise the rough surface will absorb too much ink and make an excessively dark letter.

Step five—Reposition the carriage and retype the erased letter(s).

We haven't said anything about correcting errors when making carbon copies. This is truly hectic. The last copy must be erased first and then a scrap of paper placed over the spot. Otherwise the erasure on the next copy will smudge the copy below. This procedure must be repeated for each successive copy. Then all the scraps must be removed. When they aren't . . . well that is a story in itself.

Then came the Smith Corona typewriters with an ink ribbon cartridge that could be removed when an error was made and a correction ribbon put in its place. By retyping the error on the correction ribbon, the substituted letter was painted over in white. After the correction cartridge was removed and the ink ribbon cartridge replaced, the correct letter could be typed in place. This procedure didn't work on carbon copies.

Another landmark was when IBM came out with an electric typewriter that had all its type mounted on a small sphere that would drunkenly flop every which way and then strike the paper with the selected letter. Soon machines equipped with daisy wheels followed.

It was with these machines that typists had their first real break on error correction. The keystrokes of each line were memorized. Thus by depressing a correction key, the sphere or daisy wheel would type in reverse with a special lift-off ribbon that would literally lift the error off the paper. Unlike corrections made manually or with cover-up ribbons, these left virtually no trace. And they were relatively easy to make.

Enter the computer.

What we have just got done saying is history. Like Communism, the typewriter has died (although a few funerals are still pending). It simply succumbed to a superior power. As I sit here at my Toshiba notebook, working in WinWord, I can't seem to drum up any nostalgic feelings for the manual, electric and electronic warriors that used to be my faithful companions.

Here's why.

As I write, the dictionary in my word processor checks the spelling of each word as I type it. If the spelling is incorrect, a jagged line immediately appears under the word. I simply hit the backspace key to delete the misspelled letters and retype correctly. If the word is complicated and I can't seem to get it right, I double click an icon at the bottom right hand side of the screen and the dictionary flashes some alternate spellings from which to choose.

But that isn't all. To err is human and so a study has been done on which words are commonly misspelled by humans. They have been entered into the memory of my word processor. When I type "adn" for example, it quietly corrects itself to "and." I may never know I misspelled that word. Words which I often misspell, possibly because of the juxtaposition of several letters on the keyboard, I include them in the dictionary and they too are quietly corrected.

What does all this mean? It means that the price of a correction has plummeted.

Today most corrections, including the dreaded paragraph omissions, that a few years ago could easily mean retyping a long document, are a snap. It has never been easier to err and cheaper to amend. And that's what this article is all about.

Conscience is a typewriter. Back in the days of the "manual" conscience, people understood the price of an error. This doesn't mean they didn't err. They did. But tucked away in their conscience was the knowledge that the day they wanted to straighten their life out, certain corrections would have to be made. And they knew exactly what they were.

It was exactly this conscience that kept many men and women, many young people, on the right track. They knew what it would cost them to correct their errors. They also knew that certain errors, like the omitted paragraph, could represent a ruined life.

Then came the "cover-up" conscience. God's omniscience was ignored and the determining factor on doing or not doing something was whether or not it could be covered up before man. There was still a knowledge of right and wrong, but the fear of sin was replaced by the simple fear of being caught.

The "lift-off" conscience makes everything relative. Circumstances determine if something is right or wrong. If circumstances vindicate an act, then wrong becomes right. The "lift-off" is so thorough that no sign remains of the original error. The release, the peace of mind, that before could only be found with the eraser of repentance is now a painless keystroke away. Simply hit the correction key and type over top what seems more convenient.

The "word processor" conscience—or better stated, lack of conscience. On my word processor I can simply choose "no proofing" and the jagged line doesn't show up under the misspelled words. Or I can include them in my personal dictionary and then, so far as my word processor is concerned, they are correct.

That describes the world today. We are living in a conscienceless society in which the pursuit of personal happiness takes precedence over moral considerations or precepts. Not even circumstances are necessary to justify a course of action. They aren't necessary because when the sense of right and wrong is lost, when the conscience is dead, it really doesn't matter what others think, or Heaven itself for that matter.

The price of an error has dropped to zero. Well, not really. The laws of nature, as well as the laws of the land, are still to be feared. But on a personal basis, people no longer agonize over the consequences of deciding to straighten up at a later date, or of being found out, and much less of one day having to stand in celestial judgment.

Living in this kind of a world will become increasingly difficult. The biggest danger is that we grow weary in erasing when there seems to be a much easier way. Even now old-time repentance in which the knees touch the earth and the soul touches heaven seems somewhat cumbersome. Why agonize if it isn't really necessary?

We do well to analyze our lives to see what kind of a price tag we are placing on an error. On sin. Unless we are willing to pay full price, the eraser of repentance, like the old manual typewriter will become a museum piece and personal happiness will become more important than salvation. And we shall have neither. ▲

The School Mailbox

Monte Alegre School

Have you wondered what our school age children think about Brazil? Here's your chance to find out.

Miss Velda Loewen asked her upper grade students at the Monte Alegre School to write a composition on subjects related to life in Brazil. The results were excellent. In fact, if space would have permitted, I would have liked to publish them all. Since that wasn't possible, some were chosen to cover as wide a range of topics as possible.

Notice the liberal sprinkling of Portuguese words these students unconsciously use in their writing.

If any of you students in N America have any questions about what has been written, write us and we'll try and come up with some explanations.

Parrots

By Joetta Burns, grade 8

Parents: Tim & Deanna Burns

Parrots are some of the most beautiful birds in the world. About 150 species, which is almost half of the parrots in the world are found in Central and South America. So, quite a few of these are found in Brazil. Some of the most common ones in our area are the arara, mulata, papagaio, and the periquito. There is not a parrot in Brazil that I would consider to be ugly.

The periquito de asa amarela is one of the smallest parrots in our area. It is between four and six inches long. This parrot is all green with a little bit of yellow on its wing. They make their nests in old ant hills, in trees. There is a hole on top, and a hole on the bottom of the nest. Sometimes it is a wonder that the baby birds don't fall out the bottom! If you can find a periquito when it still is very young and in the nest, you can get it and raise it as a pet. They are small and not at all hard to take care of.

One of the largest parrots in Brazil is the arara. There are many kinds of araras in Brazil. The most common around here is an arara with blue on its back and underneath it is all yellow. There are araras with red on the underside, but it is rare that we see any. The araras usually make their nests in old, dead, palm trees. I have never heard of the arara being kept as a pet.

The common, medium sized parrots that we see around here all the time are either mulatas or papagaios. Most of these are green with a few little bits of red or orange. These two are about the same size, but the papagaio has a real short tail and the mulata has a long one. Quite often the mulata makes his nest in people's attics, but it is not done naturally. Naturally the papagaio and mulata make their nests in old dead palm trees. Both of these can be kept as pets. The papagaio is one of the best of wild parrots to learn to talk.

There is also a parrot that is not so very large, and is not found in this part of Brazil.

Its name is ararajuba. It is Brazil's natural bird. This parrot is yellow with only a little green; on its wings. I do not know whether it makes a good pet, or where and how it makes its nests.

I have touched only five of the 150 parrots of Brazil. It would take a whole book and more to tell about all Brazil's parrots.

Harvest Time

By Adrienne Hibner, grade 8

Parents: Arlo & Priscilla Hibner

Don't you think life on a farm is interesting? I sure think so! I don't like to just sit around or work just at home. I like to ride in vehicles. That is so much more fun don't you think so? After the corn or beans are brown and ripe, that means it's time to combine. So you have to get the combine ready after it has been sitting for a year, and then after it's ready we go to the field and start combining. After you go a few rounds the bin gets full so you auger it into the bazuca and the bazuca takes it to the truck that is waiting to be filled. Then when the truck is filled he takes it to town to Kowalski and empties it there and then comes back to get another load. Sometimes the trucker brings his children along if he has any. At dinner time we make dinner, pack it all up, and take it to the field where they are combining. Somtimes I get to stay there after dinner to ride on the bazuca and combine and then when mom takes merenda I go home with her. Now after all this I told you about don't you think you want to bye a farm here in Brazil, too? If you do come on!

Pets in Brazil

By Quinda Rose Holdeman, grade 7

Parents: Daniel & Linda Holdeman

Would you like to know what kind of pets we've had? Coatis, cats, parrots, dogs and rabbits.

The coatis are related to the raccoons and have long ringed tails that go straight up when they run. If they are up in a tree and get scared, they drop to the ground and take off running.

They eat any kind of foods they can find, eggs, insects, vegetables, fruits, lizards, mice, etc.

One time my dad and brothers were planting at our other farm. The boys went to a woods nearby. They saw a nest up in a tree about 12 yards up. My brother Wesley, who was about 14 years old then, climbed up the tree and stuck his hand through the bottom of the nest to see if there was anything in it. One baby coati fell out and Wesley let go of the branch to grab the coati and fell head first. On his way down he hit a branch and flipped over and landed on his back on the ground. At first he couldn't breathe and Delton my oldest brother thought he was dying. Just a few feet away there was a big stick laying on the ground which he could have fallen on and got hurt worse, but thankfully he didn't.

Karla my older sister and I took dinner over to the field and then we brought him home.

No bones were broken!

For about 6 months we had 3 coatis at our place. We would feed them milk in a little bottle and they would hold the bottle with all four feet!

As they got older, they would crack open the chicken eggs from our chicken house and eat them!

When my dad would be working on something outside, they would crawl all over him, and put their noses in his ears. They would get on the roof of the house and on the window sills and get the windows dirty. When we got tired of them doing all that nonsense, we would put them in the cage. There they would run around so much that the bottom of their feet would get sore and start bleeding.

We had the coatis for a while and took them back to the woods.

Trucks

By Isaac Penner, grade 8

Parents: Eldon & Bonnie Penner

Now here in Brazil they have some fancy trailers. Here are the names of some of them: Volvo, Mercedes, Scania, etc. The new Volvos are real tall with the top slanting up. The Mercedes is a little shorter and lower than the Volvos. The truck you will most see on the roads is the Scania. It is not as rounded off as most other trucks.

Very few people own their own trucks. It is mostly the company that owns them but they get other people to drive them.

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The Anaconda

By Steve Holdeman, grade 6

Parents: Harold & Irene Holdeman

Look at that anaconda! Anacondas are one of the largest kinds of snakes in the world. They are not poisonous, but they have many sharp teeth and can inflict deep wounds. Anacondas kill their prey by wrapping themselves around and squeezing it to death. How would you like a hug like that?

Anacondas have olive green skin with black spots or rings. The noise an anaconda makes is between the call of a peacock and the bawl of a calf. They live near streams and marshes.

Daniel Kramer brought an anaconda to school awhile back. The way they killed it was that they saw it on the road and drove over it. It didn't die, but it was hurt. It crawled into the water and they couldn't find it. Then they heard the anaconda bawl and found it. Jeff shot at it and after a few tries he got it. Then they took it to their place and during the night it had turned around and crawled a little way. In the morning they brought it to school.

Canyons

By Gloria Holdeman, grade 8

Parents: Caleb & Joanne Holdeman

As we roll on four wheels toward the monstrous canyons we feel an urge of excitement when we near our long awaited view of the canyons. When we look down the canyons our poor heads start a thorough spin. I sometimes throw a rock down the canyons. Clear at the bottom of the canyons you can see cattle trails and even a hut. One time when we went there I saved a few rocks, but by now I've thrown them away. It is very hot there. There are lots of scrub and short trees. I think everyone from the States should get a view of the canyons. They are beautiful.

Cattle

By Otávio Becker, grade 8

Parents: Charles & Faith Becker

Have you ever gone on a cattle drive before? I haven't but I can tell you that the experiences I've had driving cattle in just from the pasture, it is lots of fun. The most fun is when the cowboys rope the calves from horseback in a small pen near the corral or also called "corral pasture." The cowboys "throw" the calves by; roping their hind legs and jerking hard. Then the "brander" or person who brands comes and puts one brand on the calves and sometimes but not often two. But, that is the slow fun way of branding calves. The faster way is to run them thru' the shoot and brand them one by one. But depending on how many cowboys are roping from horseback, you can usually get more cattle branded in one day by running them thru' the shoot. I like branding calves.

Toucans

By Sherry Stoltzfus, grade 6

Parents: Elias & Colleen Stoltzfus

A toucan is one of the worlds prettiest birds! It's bill is enormous and looks very heavy however it weighs very little because it contains numerous air pockets. We live in between two large woodlands and so we see quite a few flying back and forth. The one we see the most is the one with a mainly black body, a little red under the tail and a white throat. A toucans bill can be many colours. They probably use their colourful bills to attract their mates.

Jatobá Falls

By Candace Holdeman, grade 6

Parents: Stanley & Kathy Holdeman

Hey, this feels good! This water from the Jabotá Falls. I got a dunking when I went down the falls. That was great. The last time I went to the Jatobá Falls was when we had a Warkentin gathering with Uncle Duane & Aunt Adeline and Chipper & Wanda. They are our relation from Alberta, Canada. There is a place higher than the falls but

downstream from the falls. It is a nice, shady place because there are lots of trees. There are big, flat stones where we put our food on when we go to the falls. I went down the falls first on the raft with my cousin Phyllis. The next time I went with Dad the raft tipped over on us! Once Chipper went down the falls on his seat hanging onto the tube. He wasn't ready yet! It was very funny! He wasn't hurt though; he was laughing! ▲

Zigzagging Around

My Age

I thought I knew how old I was. But then my publisher wrote me a letter and really upset the apple cart. But let's back up a bit.

I mentioned in a recent issue of BN, in the School Mailbox, how shocked Brazilians are when they find out that we used to take a bath only once a week in N America. My publisher tells me that someone (he didn't say who) was "slightly steamed" about this. "Used to," this historian told him, "was approximately 100 years ago."

It's totally understandable if you are feeling a strong urge to loudly sing your national anthem and then step up on an apple crate and judiciously proclaim that finally the editor of BN has gotten a good dose of what he needed. But wait. Like a pebble tossed in a pool that sends ripples in all directions, the implications of what the slightly steamed historian has to say don't travel only southward.

Let's face facts.

When I thought I was approximately 10 years old, living in the state of Kansas, it was still very much in vogue to submit to a weekly bath. Can you remember those days? If you can, get out your calculator and press a few buttons. First of all enter the age you thought you were when people in your community still took weekly baths. Hit the plus key. Now enter one-zero-zero. Hit the equal key. That hundred and some number staring you in the face, my good centenarian reader, is your age today—according to the latest interpretation of history.

Yes, yes, it's just a little joke. But did you know that much of history, as it is written, is also a little joke? The rest is a big joke.

Contrary to what you may believe, history is not a simple narration of facts. Modern history is a mixture of facts and artifacts which the historian interprets according to his personal ideologies. In case that little definition has confused you, we explain.

A fact is "information presented as objectively real." We say facts don't lie. But facts can be suppressed. They can be downplayed. Or they can be overemphasized. They can be distorted. Facts can be carefully selected and grouped together in such a way that they give an entirely false impression.

An artifact is "an object produced or shaped by human craft, especially a tool, a weapon or an ornament of archaeological or historical interest." This is where the big problem comes in. Ph.D.'s, down on their hands and knees in the bottom of a hole,

carefully brush and remove broken pieces of pottery and bones, which are taken to a laboratory, where scientists go into a swoon as they realize the importance of their find. When they get done punching all their data into a calculator, my age of approximately 110 years, looks mighty tame compared to what they come up with.

When we first moved to Brazil we had outdoor shanties. In addition to their primordial function, we soon found they were the perfect place to dispose of broken glassware.

If time should continue another thousand years, I can just see some imposing Ph.D. down on his knees sifting through the “artefices” on one of the old shanty sites and suddenly yelling at the top of his lungs: “Sam! Come here! I have it! I have just discovered why this people ceased to exist. They became glass eaters! Without a doubt it was a religious ritual, but it just tore their inside all up.”

Sam, the young assistant, stares at his mentor in awe.

Big joke, huh? Would you like to hear some way funnier ones? National Geographic, Reader’s Digest, Time, and a lot of history books, have way funnier ones than that.

And do you know what? People don’t even laugh when they read these jokes. They’re impressed.

That’s not the only way that history is distorted. Paulo David, whose name frequently appears in this little paper, is a history teacher. We have spent hours discussing “history.” And yes, in the past some of his views of US history have caused me to become slightly steamed. But the interesting thing is that his way of explaining history has changed tremendously from when I first knew him.

What has happened? Has history changed or have new facts or artifacts been unearthed?

The other night Paulo and his family were here for the evening (to help celebrate my 110th birthday). When things got sort of loud, it was because the subject was history again.

Most of you are probably aware that one of the greatest triumphs of communism was the infiltration of universities in the free world. Text books were rewritten to reflect history as seen through the left eye instead of the right.

Knowing the futility of trying to conquer the free world in conventional warfare, the communists followed the example of Balaam and used the power of suggestion. Even as we exult over the fall of the hammer and sickle, we fail to see the tremendous damage that was inflicted on the minds of several generations of young people.

We see the Industrial Revolution, which began in England during the middle of the eighteenth century and spread to many countries of the world, as a tremendous step forward for humanity. Marxists, on the other hand, point to it as the triumph of the bourgeois over the proletariat, that is, of the rich over the poor. In their version of history, that which we call progress, they call oppression.

Paulo says that the pendulum is now swinging back and it is no longer considered good taste to interpret history through the left eye of Marxism.

It isn’t only Marxists who disfigure history. Racists do it. (Hitler had his own

personalized version of history.) Nations systematically slant history to their favor. (Do you suppose the US and Mexico have similar versions of the Alamo?)

And so what we read in history books can't be believed? Let's put it another way. When reading history, remember it is a man's interpretation of the facts and artifacts which he has chosen to use. Read with discretion.

Yes, read with discretion. More and more, modern history casts a shadow on Biblical history. Faithless men give faithless interpretations to events that are recorded in the Bible. The Jordan River is to have stopped flowing because of a mammoth landslide upriver. Sodom and Gomorrah are to have been destroyed by a volcano.

The only history we can be absolutely sure about is that which agrees with the Bible. ▲

Shanties

I mentioned our outdoor shanty in the previous article. Even though it isn't politically correct to do so, a lot of interesting things could be told about shanties. After all, what would we have ever done without that ignoble little cubicle?

Call it what you will: shanty, outhouse, backhouse (a hangover from the Dutch, I believe), privy, toilet... It all adds up to the same thing. But folks, it took character to find a flashlight on a zero evening with the wind blowing and head out to the shanty before going to bed. It took character for a first grader to raise his hand and ask teacher for permission "to use the toilet," which meant making his way through two foot snowdrifts. (In fair weather it was a temptation to get out of a little studying by hiking to the shanty, but never in a blizzard.)

The humble shanty was an epitome of simplicity and objectivity. Since just getting to one of these little four by four huts was in itself often a veritable tour de force, builders apparently saw a certain incongruity in affording its occupant any kind of comfort. And it makes sense. Back in the days when people had eight or ten children, and only one shanty, comfort would have been disastrous.

You readers who were born in the first half of his century will remember the cozy feeling your first indoor shanty—whoops, bathroom—gave you.

Today we take all this for granted. In fact, to have only one bathroom in your house can be taken by some as a sign of poverty.

Public restrooms have come a long way too from what they used to be. I ought to know.

Returning to Brazil after our visit to the US, we had a layover in Miami. While waiting in the airport for our international flight, I decided to visit the restroom. I saw the restrooms were at the far end of the lounge where we were waiting. So I headed out in that direction.

I was amazed to find that I had the whole place to myself. And what a place! I headed for the first booth. Almost as an afterthought I shut the door. All that the old shanty lacked in comfort and convenience this place had. Roomy, it doubled as a dressing room for a weary traveler wanting to tidy up for the next flight.

With a good book, it wouldn't have been hard to spend an hour in there.

It wasn't until I walked out of that delightful little room that I got my first inkling that something wasn't quite right in my newfound paradise. There stood a lady giving me the once-over in a somewhat less than charitable way.

She said, "Do you know that you're in the ladies restroom?"

The most appropriate answer I could think of at that exact moment was, "Ya, it looks like it."

So that is what I said.

I don't know what that lady learned through all this, if anything. I wonder if maybe she wasn't impressed by how much dignity I was able to dredge up as I purposefully strode out of her section of town. It just goes to prove that one can never be too careful. I sincerely hope she remembers that before barging in on someone again. ▲

Missions

Missionary Workshop

Missionaries in Brazil face a peculiar problem. Because of the distance between mission posts, they very seldom see each other. The two missions that are closest together are Rio Verde and Goiânia, but even that can easily take three hours.

This means they don't have the privilege of sitting down together and discussing how things are going. In other words, they can't "talk shop."

That is one of the reasons for the occasional missionary workshops. They get to see each other. They get to spend time with the board. They get to be together with the base church. And last but not least, the home church gets to spend time with the missionaries.

The missionary workshop this year was held on February 6 (at the Monte Alegre Congregation) and 7 (at the Rio Verdinho Congregation), with morning, afternoon and evening sessions. The daytime sessions were only for missionaries, former missionaries and all staff members. The evening meetings were open for all.

The first evening different former missionaries gave short talks on related subjects.

The first talk was by Dea. John Unruh, a former missionary from Mexico. He told about some of the ups and downs of missionary life. About a year ago he returned to Mexico for a visit, over 18 years after leaving the field. He was pleasantly surprised to see the growth that had taken place in members, some of whom had gotten converted during the time they spent there.

Next was Luiz Duarte, who spent time in the mission in Acaraú together with his family. He related the Lord called him for this work over a period of time.

Myron Kramer and his family were the first missionaries in Pirenópolis. He brought in an interesting aspect of mission work. First he told how the Lord opened the door to go to the mission and then how He opened the door to leave the mission. This is a

grace. Missionaries can hinder the work by leaving too soon, as well as by not leaving soon enough. Myron, how about writing an article about this?

Min. Staven Schmidt told of some of their experiences in the Pirenópolis mission. Partially self-supporting, Staven did custom tractor work for the small farmers in the area. Shortly after arriving on the field, he was working for a local farmer, whose father suddenly passed away.

He thought it might be in place to sing for the family, so he went back to town and talked to the members. They disagreed, saying the family was very Catholic and wouldn't appreciate it. But with a little insistence, they decided to go anyway.

Staven reports that the family appreciated it very much and to this day there is a close tie between them.

It is interesting that Pirenópolis had only two missionaries, Myron Kramer and Staven Schmidt, before it evolved into a congregation—a mighty fine one.

The following evening at the Rio Verdinho Congregation we had two talks. The first one was by Min. Richard Mininger. He began by getting us to think what it would be like to be in jail or not have our liberty. He said that if someday we would be going to town and see someone tied to a tree by the side of the road, we would stop and rescue him. How much more shouldn't we feel for those who are bound or in prison spiritually?

Min. Elias Stoltzfus told of how we have the tendency of feeling sorry for our missionaries. We feel it is such a sacrifice for them to leave their home surroundings—and really there is a certain sacrifice involved. Wouldn't it be more appropriate to direct our feelings of sympathy to the lost souls whom the missionaries are going to seek? They are the ones who are in prison, the ones who are bound.

The General Mission Board is doing a gradual retreat from the field in Brazil. The idea is that the church here should supply and support its own missionaries.

Our first reaction may be to throw up our hands and say, "Impossible! We can't do it."

Let's look at this situation mathematically. For our figures to come out, we must conclude that if it is improper to spend time feeling sorry for our missionaries, it is equally improper to feel sorry for ourselves if the work of the kingdom requires giving a tenth of our earnings (or at least of what we spend on ourselves).

First of all, what does a missionary cost us? Does it cost more for a missionary to live on the field than it would for him to live at home? It depends. On some fields it may cost less. On others it may cost considerably more. It would probably be safe to say that 12 households giving a tenth could support one missionary on the field.

That's straightforward enough, but where does the money come from for taking care of the home church? Would the tenth given by one half of the households keep a congregation going? Let's just assume that out of every 25 households, 12 would pay into the mission treasure and 13 would pay into the congregational fund.

That would mean that a congregation with 50 households should be able to support two missionaries, plus meet the necessary congregational expenses. If it doesn't work, it would mean that (a) this theory doesn't hold water, (b) we're behind on our giving, or (c) our missionary expenses are high.

Here in Brazil we are well over a hundred households. It's true that some of these are low income families or only one spouse is a member. But it's also true that others, at the opposite end of the economic scale, help balance this out. Based on this little theory, we should be able to support four missionaries. Brazil at present has five, three of which are sponsored by the General Mission Board and two by Brazil.

We must remember, however, that our literature program is not self-supporting as of yet. This work requires approximately the funds of a mission field. That means we would be able to support three missionary couples on the field. In the missionary workshop it was decided, in an evening meeting by all present, to open a mission in Curitiba, in southern Brazil, as soon as feasible. That will make a total of six missionary couples.

So if the General Mission Board would suddenly pull out, that would leave us four missionaries short.

And maybe not. A missionary from Brazil costs much less than one from N America. For several reasons. First of all, there are no expensive international plane tickets involved. Secondly, there is no time "lost" in language study. From day one the missionary is able to get to work. Thirdly, if the missionary decides to be partially self-supporting, this is legally possible. Two partially self-supporting missionaries will probably cost us about what one conventional missionary costs.

So now let's look ahead three or four years. By then the literature work will hopefully be carrying its own weight. That means we could support four missionaries. But by then there should be 125 households, which would add one more missionary, bringing the total to five. Then if two of them would be partially self-supporting, we could handle six—that is, if this little theory holds water.

It was also decided in the missionary workshop to begin a work in the town of Bom Jesus de Goiás, approximately 100 km. from Rio Verde. No missionary will be sent there, but different ones will make regular visits. That may end up counting as a missionary couple.

So folks, even if the General Mission Board tells us "adeus" in the next couple of years, the work won't stop. In fact, it doesn't even have to slow down.

I gave a number of reasons for having the missionary workshops here. I saved the most important one for the last. It's to inspire the home church to see the need. ▲

A Story for Children

A Court Case

A young man was arrested, charged with the commission of a certain crime, and was lodged in jail. He was brought before the magistrate for his preliminary hearing, and remanded for further investigation of his case.

One day as he was sitting, gloomy in spirit, in his cell, the jailer opened the door

and admitted a stranger. The stranger appeared to be a young man; he was plainly clad; and not of a particularly striking appearance in the gloom of the prison cell. But he came and sat down beside the prisoner and spoke to him very kindly, and said that he was sorry to find him in this state. He said, "I understand you have no friends?" No, I have not many friends," said the young man. "Well," said the stranger, "you will need someone to appear for you when the day of trial comes; and I am myself an advocate, and if you will put your case in my hands I think I can do something for you: indeed I will make bold to promise you absolute acquittal."

The young man was very cautious, and said, "That is very kind of you, sir, but I really have not made any selection yet of anyone to appear for me." To himself he said, "If this man were a man of ability and prominence, he would not come begging a case. I should have to send for him; and further, he would be differently appareled, there would be evidences of prosperity about him. I am afraid he could not do very much for me." To him the stranger was without form or comeliness. To gain time, he said, "I will not make a decision today, sir. I hope to select an advocate sometime before the trial, and if you will come and see me again I will think the matter over." The stranger went away.

Sometime later the jailer admitted another, this time a man of very striking appearance, and of pleasing dress, with shining diamonds upon his fingers, and every appearance of a man of the world who was exceedingly prosperous. He too said, "I am sorry to see you here. I suppose you have not yet appointed anyone to appear in your behalf on the day of Assize?" And the young man said, "No, I have not. A stranger came a little while ago and offered me his services, but I asked him to give me further time to think." "Well," said the stranger, "I am an advocate, and I have an influence at court; and I have read of your case, and I am profoundly sympathetic with you; and I should be very glad indeed to undertake your case if you will put it in my hands." Again the young man reasoned with himself. "This man seems to be a more likely advocate than the other; I think I had better close with him at once." And so he said, "Very well, sir, I gladly accept your offer, and I will put my case in your hands."

A day or so later the first stranger returned, and said, "I hope you have now arrived at a decision." "Yes," he said, "I have. After you called the other day, another came, and I must say he greatly impressed me, and I accepted his offer and handed my case over to him." "I am sorry to hear that," said the stranger. "I wish you would reconsider it, for I know the other advocate, and I am sure he can do nothing for you; and I am sure if you put your case in his hands, you are a lost man; whereas I will promise you acquittal." He pleaded with him most earnestly, but he said, "I am afraid it is too late." "Well," he said, "I give you my offer again. I ask you to reconsider it." The young man refused and the stranger went away. Thereafter, day after day the stranger came back again, always offering his services and begging him to reconsider the matter. And then as the day of the trial drew very near, the stranger came more frequently and was more insistent and more earnest in his appeal. At last, one day he said to the prisoner, "I have come with my last appeal. I give you one more opportunity to change your mind, and on this

occasion I must tell you I was present when you committed the crime. I saw you do it with my own eyes. I know that your hands are red with blood, and that you are guilty of murder; and yet I have a way whereby I can secure your acquittal.” The young man looked at him, pondered it over, and at last decided, “I don’t believe he saw me do the deed. I don’t believe him.” And he said, “No, I am afraid it is too late. I have engaged my counsel.” The stranger moved towards the door, then he paused and said, “Will you change your mind?” He opened the door and stopped outside then he pushed it open again and said, “Did you call me back?” “No,” said the young man, “I have made my decision.” And the door closed.

The day of the trial dawned at last, and the prisoner was brought to the bar. The counsel for the prosecution and the defense were present and all the witnesses were there. The courtroom was crowded and everyone was breathlessly waiting for the appearance of the judge.. At length in the courtyard without was heard the trampling of horses’ feet as the judge’s carriage drove up accompanied by an armed escort. A solemn hush fell upon the court as the judge in all his robes of office took his place upon the bench. All eyes were fastened upon him, particularly the prisoner’s.

But the moment the prisoner looked into the face of the judge his heart almost stood still; his face took on an ashen hue; his knees knocked together; for he recognized in the judge upon the bench the one whom he had refused as his advocate. There was no pity now; no mercy; no offer of repentance. And as the trial proceeded, and witness after witness was called upon for the defense, the prisoner’s head was bowed in utter dejection and helplessness, for he said, “What avails all this evidence, when my judge knows that I am guilty?”

You know the moral of my parable. Christ comes as an advocate today. I beg of you to put your case in his hands. He has never lost a case. He will not lose yours. But if you reject him, when He comes as your Judge, all hope will be at an end. I beseech you to be reconciled to God.

(Taken from an old copy of *The Gospel for the Youth*)