

Brazil News



No. 71
April 1997

Editorial

The Three Warnings

When José A. Moreno, the pilot of TAM flight 402, took the controls of the Fokker 100 in the São Paulo airport, he knew the auto-throttle wasn't working right. The pilot who just brought the aircraft in from Curitiba, casually mentioned the problem when debriefing Moreno. More of a nuisance than a problem, it meant that the throttles might have to be advanced manually during takeoff.

Because of its excellent service, and in spite of steeper fares, TAM is the airline preferred by many executives. With its fleet of Fokker 100's, not only has it achieved an admirable safety record, but impressive profits as well. Passengers who flew TAM had every reason to feel secure.

As flight 402 was taxiing to the runway with 91 passengers and five crew members aboard, the first alarm sounded in the cockpit. Believing it to be related to the faulty auto-throttle, the captain facetiously remarked to the copilot, "Is that thing already starting to give us fits?"

"We haven't even left the ground," was the copilot's rejoinder.

The second alarm sounded moments after acceleration for takeoff. Apparently still thinking the problem was the auto-throttle, the pilot remarked, "That's it all right."

When the plane was rolling down the runway at 64 kilometers an hour, the third alarm sounded—a double alarm. No effort was made to abort the flight and soon the copilot called out, "V1," which meant takeoff speed had been reached.

Seconds after leaving the ground, a loud clang was heard in the cockpit. The right throttle recoiled violently from its forward position, striking the rear housing.

"It's stuck!" the copilot exclaimed as he tried to push it forward.

Still believing the problem was the auto-throttle, the captain ordered, "Disengage [the auto-throttle] and advance [the throttle] manually."

Seeing the craft was losing altitude, the captain, with a trace of worry in his voice, repeated the order. The copilot tersely responded, "It's off, it's off!"

Brazil News

The plane continued to lose altitude and the yoke began to shudder, indicating a stall. The right wing began dropping and the captain's last words were registered in the black box: "Oh, my God!"

A strident recording now came on informing the flight crew that the plane was crashing, ending with the words, "Don't sink!"

By now the wings were perpendicular to the earth and the bottom one, the right wing, hit a building, ending flight 402. There were no survivors.

Flight 402 need not have crashed. After all, there were three warnings. With our magnificent hindsight, it's easy to see everything that captain Moreno did wrong.

The Indians used to say that one shouldn't judge another without first walking in his moccasins for a mile. And so, before judging captain Moreno too sternly, let's sit down in the pilot's seat and see how we do at the controls.

Captain Moreno knew the auto-throttle on his craft needed to be repaired. Since accelerating manually was a simple procedure, he hardly gave the problem a second thought. He felt he had the situation under control.

We often face problems in life that seem quite insignificant. Like the faulty auto-throttle, they seem to be more of a nuisance than an actual problem.

What Moreno didn't know was that it wasn't the faulty auto-throttle that was setting off the alarm in his craft. The real issue was a very serious problem in the thrust reverser of the right turbine.

Like Moreno, we tend to place too much confidence in our knowledge. We forget that life, like a commercial jet, is very complex. We forget too, that behind apparently simple problems there often lurk much greater problems which we are unable to see.

When the first alarm sounded, Moreno could have—and should have—returned to the terminal. True, it would have been unpleasant to inform his passengers: "Ladies and gentlemen, due to technical problems we are returning . . ."

Unpleasant yes, but quite simple. After all, he hadn't reached the main runway yet.

Our first alarm is usually our conscience. A sound conscience seldom—if ever—lets us down. It too warns us before things have gotten serious, while there is still a simple solution, albeit unpleasant at times.

It's true that our conscience is programmed, just like the alarm system on a modern aircraft is also programmed. The alarm on flight 402 didn't identify the problem—just alerted the pilot to the fact that something was amiss. Likewise our conscience at times doesn't specify exactly what the problem is. Alas, like Moreno, we sometimes feel we know what the problem is and have it under control. And so we ignore the voice of conscience.

The second alarm occurred on the main runway just as the turbines were accelerating. The auto-throttle was still working. It would have been a very straightforward procedure to abort the takeoff at this stage. But everything indicates that Moreno still didn't consider the possibility that maybe the problem was more than a mere nuisance.

The second warning sounded just like the first. The simple fact that it was repeated

increased its urgency. The same is true for us. Only more so. The second warning is usually the voice of the Holy Spirit. We shouldn't think it strange that sometimes we can't distinguish between the voice of conscience and the voice of the Spirit. After all, they do work hand in hand.

What we may think strange, though, is the fact that at times the Spirit sounds an alarm without really pointing out the danger. What He wants is that we return to the terminal and check out our life. Our human nature would like a printout of the problem, a recording. We would like to know if we're up against a real problem or merely a nuisance.

The third alarm—the double alarm—sounded at a time when the takeoff could still have been aborted. Once again it was ignored and soon the plane was airborne.

For us this third warning frequently is of a forceful nature. It may be some unexpected situation, the voice of man or of the church. It may seem rude or unjust. We may dislike it, dispute or disregard it, but the fact remains that this third warning—the double warning—should never be ignored. Just as the Spirit works through the conscience, it also is present in this warning.

Captain Moreno chose to ignore this third warning and proceed with takeoff. The craft was barely airborne when the right thrust reverser was activated for a brief second, which is what caused the right throttle to recoil, creating the loud clanking noise in the cockpit. Six seconds later it happened again. Another four seconds and the thrust was reversed for the third time—and remained that way.

It couldn't have happened at a worse time. The Fokker 100 can take off with only one turbine. But it definitely cannot take off, or even maintain altitude, with one turbine reversed. With only 50 meters of altitude, and sinking, there was no possible way to return to the runway for an emergency landing.

The plane was in the air exactly 24 seconds before crashing into a residential section of São Paulo, miraculously killing only three residents.

Why did TAM flight 204 crash? Preliminary returns on the report being drafted by aviation authorities place the bulk of the blame on the faulty thrust reverser. After opening for the third time, the teleflex, a cable which connected the reverser to the turbine, separated, precluding any possibility of saving the flight, no matter how dexterous the pilot might have been.

But that does not vindicate the pilot. Nor the copilot. After all, there were three warnings. The preliminary report cites this fact, which, of course, places a blemish on captain Moreno's otherwise impeccable record.

Ninety-nine souls died (including the three on the ground) when the Fokker 100 crashed. Looked at mathematically, for each warning the pilot ignored, 33 people perished.

That makes a warning look quite important.

(You older readers, think back to spiritual crashes that took place 40, 50 or 60 years ago. Today, how many casualties are there per warning?)

All spiritual crashes involve at least three warnings. So often the pilot is a fine

looking young man or woman. Like Moreno, they have a good record. But then one day they ignore a small warning.

Nothing happens.

A second warning, which also is ignored. There is an uneasiness, but again nothing happens.

And so it is forgotten

A third warning. A double warning. They recognize that there is a problem. But they've built up enough momentum in what they're doing that it would be sort of awkward to put on the brakes. So they proceed at full throttle.

V1. They become airborne. They lose altitude and crash. But contrary to what happens in an aviation disaster, where charred bodies tell the story, they imagine they are soaring above the clouds.

They say all is well.

Yes, before being too hard on captain Moreno, let's remember the warnings we have ignored, the narrow escapes we have had. Even now, is it possible that we have heard the third warning—and yet we rush down the runway at full throttle?

The last words captain Moreno spoke were, "Oh, my God!" The last words he heard were, "Don't sink!"

Three warnings had been ignored. And so he sank. ▲

Culture

Culture—What is it?

Why are some races or peoples more happy-go-lucky than others? Why are some more industrious? Or hot-blooded? Or affable? Or illusive?

Culture, we say, is the answer. Unless we know what culture is, that answer really doesn't say much.

Culture is a collective personality. It's a set of traits or patterns of behavior that are found, to a greater or lesser degree, in the inhabitants of a given country or region.

That definition is straightforward enough. But it still leaves unanswered questions. It doesn't tell us how these traits or patterns of behavior are acquired and collectively transmitted from one generation to another. Is it strictly a social phenomenon, or do genetics play a part?

Put another way, if ten children from ten different cultures were taken at birth and all placed in a neutral foster home, would it be possible, over a period of time, to discover where they were from strictly by their behavior?

A number of years ago Reader's Digest published a story about a tribe of Indians, I believe in the Amazon basin, in which men were rated by their ability to deceive.

It told of several neighboring tribes that live in a perpetual state of animosity. Several of the men in one of the tribes saw the futility of slowly killing each other off.

Brazil 5 News

As self-appointed peace ambassadors, they set out to improve relations between the two tribes.

In a true show of courage, they paid their neighbors a visit and presented their plan of peaceful coexistence. Their listeners showed interest and promised to think about it. Several visits of this nature were made. The talks went well and finally a day was set for the ambassadors to return, when the peace treaty would be formalized.

The big day came. Once again the ambassadors were warmly welcomed and everyone assembled for the final ceremony that would forever change their tribal relations. No more senseless killings . . .

Suddenly the two self-appointed ambassadors sensed that this final meeting was going to be final indeed. Literally. All around them warriors jumped to their feet, weapons in hand. The malicious look on their faces told the whole story. The interest shown, the repeated invitations to return for further peace negotiations, was deception at its finest.

Obviously, in such a society, the rule is survival of the slickest. Those who don't cultivate the art of deceit go the way of the ambassadors.

The question is: If you were wanting to adopt a baby and you found there was one available in one of these tribes, would you be interested?

Exame magazine recently had an article that compares the Japanese and Brazilian cultures.

The Japanese are possibly the most gracious, courteous people in the world. In the airport as they meet incoming loved ones, instead of the wild embrace, they bow low to each other, after which they shake hands and then begin conversing. A beautiful ceremony.

Placed behind a desk or counter to take care of the public, they are unrivaled. Efficient, intelligent, dynamic, they make the customer feel his problem is their problem.

And yet in the business world, they can be a nightmare to the westerner as they studiously cover their feelings with an indecipherable Mona Lisa smile.

According to Exame, they are extremely professional in their business relations. They refuse (courteously, naturally) to reveal any details about their private life.

Brazilians, on the other hand, are a very spontaneous people. They are sociable. They don't think twice to help a total stranger. Sit down with one on the plane and in 15 minutes you know who they are, where they are going, what their business is, where they live, how many children they have—the whole works. You've got yourself one good friend. And he won't forget you. Call him at two o'clock in the morning and he will hop out of bed and come to your rescue.

Sound too good to be true? It's true all right, but it's only half of the story.

Put a Brazilian behind a desk or a counter and all too often you have the antithesis of the Japanese. The same good Samaritan who will help you fix your car along the highway, and even invite you to his house for a meal, if your car has to go to the shop, can turn into a morose, inattentive public servant when on the job.

Brazil News

The girl at the cash register in the supermarket may never once look at you, much less smile, while she checks you out.

How can such a friendly people be so sour and inefficient on the job? (Obviously not everyone fits into this mold, but too many do.)

The answer is simple. The inefficiency, the unfriendliness, so often seen behind a desk or counter, is an unconscious effort to make sure the boss gets no more than what he is paying for. I have at times tried to point this out to Americans living here. I ask, “Would we do any better if we were making the kind of wages they make?”

The standard answer is that if they would be more efficient, they would make more. That is where cultures clash. The American believes that hard work pays. The Brazilian doesn't.

Both are right. In their own setting, of course. In America hard work does pay. In Brazil, for many, it doesn't. A case in point are many of our banks. They like to hire young people in their latter teens. Since they have no experience, the pay is very low. But as they work they learn (Brazilians learn very fast). Soon they are in responsible positions. But the pay remains low.

When a worker begins to show signs of dissatisfaction with his wage, he is edged out and replaced by someone who hasn't reached the complaining stage yet. The upstart is that in many banks most of the workers are in their twenties or thirties.

While this is slowly changing, too many employers still pay what could hardly be called a survival wage. If the worker doesn't like it, he can find other work.

Is it any wonder they take it out on the customer?

Recently we translated and published in the Mensageiro an article by Reuben Shirk which appeared in the Messenger, on using the Lord's name in vain. Readers were invited to respond. Two letters were received. One from an American living in Mato Grosso who wholeheartedly supported the article. The other was by a Brazilian who gave some excellent thoughts on the dangers of an unbridled tongue, but totally evaded the issue of using the Lord's name in vain.

This is a subject we (Americans) bring up in Sunday School. We try and point out that the expression, “Meu Deus!” (My God!) is using the Lord's name in vain, but it seems we're wasting our breath. “Meu Deus” continues to be the standard locution used by most Brazilian members to express surprise or strong feeling. And they're brethren whose spirituality I don't doubt.

(I think you present and past missionaries from Mexico can follow me. I clearly remember the young sister in La Boca who, after noting she had been overheard by the missionary, ruefully corrected her slip-up by exclaiming, “Oh Lord Jesus Christ, here I said ‘Diosito’ again!”)

It's culture at its strongest. Is there an explanation? We say that “Meu Deus!” is one of the first words children in Brazil hear and there probably isn't a day goes by they don't hear it dozens of times. Does that explain it? It depends on which side of the Equator you live.

Culture is a very, very strong force. It's easy to define, but hard to understand. Most

cultural changes require a generation of time. Place someone in a new environment and it may take less. Go to his environment and try and change him and it may take considerably longer.

If you don't believe what we just said, then take the little test that follows (We have graciously supplied you with the correct answers):

1. Do you consider your culture to be best? Yes.
2. Do you see any reason why you should make some cultural changes? No.
3. If someone moved into your community and tried to get people to change their cultural structure, would he have much success? No.
4. Now do you understand why people from other cultures find it hard to change? ▲

The School Mailbox

The Rio Verdinho School

Today some of the students from the Rio Verdinho School give us their observations on Brazil. Miss Maxine Loewen is the upper grade teacher and Miss Milcah Schrock teaches the lower grades. Miss Luciene Rosa teaches Portuguese.

Farming

By Kenyon P Kramer, grade 8

Parents: Dennis & Freda Kramer

In Brazil farming is one of the best ways to make a living. Some people raise cattle and farm at the same time. Corn and soybeans are the main crops. Double cropping with milo and sometimes corn is becoming quite common.

Farming is a very profitable business, and people usually make lots of money doing it. Every once in awhile there is a bad year when the crops do poorly or the prices are low.

In Brazil some of the most common kinds of tractors used are Massey's, Fords and Valmets. The most common kind of combine is the SLC.

Gardening in Brazil

By Dustin Schultz, grade 8

Parents: Lynn & Kathy Schultz

Gardening in Brazil is a challenge that I like. It feels so good to go out in the garden early in the morning and start pulling the weeds. It even helps save on the grocery bills.

Although there are certain times of the year when we plant things like peas and strawberries, we can grow lettuce, greenbeans, etc. any time of the year. It never gets too cold to have a garden so we can make almost everything thrive as long as we water and fertilize it properly. We always have to be alert for bugs that can destroy the plants.

Interesting Bugs

By Sergei Schultz, grade 6

Parents: Stanley & Mary Schultz

We have many interesting bugs in Brazil. One of the most interesting ones is the black Pine Sawyer. When a person tries to get it, it saws at our hand.

We see Rhinoceros beetles and ox beetles digging in gardens. Some get so big they barely fit in a dish as big as a pint.

We see water beetles in mud holes and in dirty ponds. Sometimes they tickle our feet while we are swimming. When they see us they dive under water out of sight.

Snakes of Brazil

By Lyndale Jay Martin, grade 4

Parents: Phil & Alfreda Martin

Some snakes are usually very dangerous. Brazil has some of the largest snakes in the world. Here they are. One is the anaconda, and the other one is the boa constrictor. The anaconda is about 30 feet long, or nine meters long. The boa constrictor is about 11 feet long or three point four meters. Neither of the huge snakes are poisonous. Both of them are strong and wrap around their prey.

There are more poisonous snakes, too. There is the coral snake (cobra coral), jararaca and the jaracuçu.

Some people think snakes are everywhere, but that is not true. Every once in a while we find them on our yard. Usually when somebody kills a rattlesnake they keep the rattlers.

Brazil's Wild Animals

By Karen L. Ferrell, grade 8

Parents: Doug & Celina Ferrell

If you are an explorer and love to see different animals species, you should come to Brazil. In the Amazon, there are many kinds of wild animals such as alligators, crocodiles, monkeys, anacondas, parrots, macaws, ocelots, a type of bobcat that lives in trees, and many types of insects.

There is also the chameleon, which belongs to the lizard family and looks like a miniature dragon. In São paulo, it is very common to see a chameleon dressed in suitable city clothes led on a leash like a dog. Their tongues are as long as their body and they may grow up to 25¼ in long. They may also change to various colors at any time.

We have coatis, which are like a fox and a bear cub, with a long black and white, fluffy tail. They feed on anything they can find under ground.

The sloth, an animal that hangs on branches upside down, feeds on leaves, buds,

and young twigs, and moves about one third of a mile per hour. Its sharp nails are so strong that after the sloth dies, it will hang there for two or three days. A sloth can be dangerous if it is in a bad mood. With its single nail on each paw, it can grab a person in no time and squeeze till the victim dies. A sloth can swim and stay a long time under water. It is a very hairy animal and may be black, brown or white.

The tapir which is often hunted for its meat, has an appearance of a pig with a short movable trunk. When the tapir walks, its trunk gets close to the ground as it smells for food.

The giant anteater that eats ants, sticks its long tongue into the ant's hole and rolls it up after the ants crawl on it. It is a furry animal with three colors, black on the nose, chest, and tail, brown on the head and paws, and gray on the rest of the body. Some people call them "Bandeira", which means "flag," because of the way their tail waves back and forth when it walks. It isn't a harmful animal and it's as big as a collie, but a little longer.

There are lots of animals and birds that are almost extinct, such as some kinds of parrots, red macaws, some monkeys, especially the Mico Leão Dourado, a small, golden color monkey with a fierce face that reminds you of a "leão" or lion.

There are many more interesting animals in Brazil than what I've already mentioned. ▲

The Church in Brazil

The Price of a Soul

What does it cost, in dollars and cents, to convert one soul?

The closest we can come to answering this rather unconventional question, is to make a wild guess. Figures aren't available on how much the church has spent in Mexico since the first mission was opened quite a few decades ago. How much money has been spent in Arizona, in Nigeria, in India, in...?

It would be a tremendous pile of money. Now divide that pile by the amount of souls who were converted by the direct or indirect efforts of missionaries sent by the church. (If you like, subtract those who fell by the wayside.)

Before making any rash statements about a lot of money having been thrown away, answer this one question: If part of it would have been spent on your parents or grandparents or great-grandparents, and you today were in the church because of it, would the price you came up with still seem exorbitant?

God forbid that we place a dollar and cent value on a human soul. Nevertheless, as the opportunities to spread the gospel pelt down on us like huge drops in a spring rain, we do need to find ways of making the best possible use of our money.

This brings us to an interesting little fact. In terms of dollars and cents, possibly in no place has the return rate been higher and the mortality rate lower, than in new areas settled by our people.

We hear good reports from N America on people getting converted in new areas. Here in Brazil we have over 60 members in the church today because either they or some relative worked for someone on the Colony. And interestingly, a number of them aren't even from Rio Verde. They just happened to be working in the area, or coming through, looking for work.

Yesterday evening we had a young couple over for supper. They are a good example of what we're talking about. This is their story:

José & Viviene Carvalho

José (known as Zé) was born in the state of São Paulo on October 17, 1967. His parents weren't religiously inclined (which didn't preclude having some saints scattered throughout the house). Neither was Zé. His dad, a farm hand of German descent, was a hard, reliable worker. In dealing with his family, he showed more obduracy than affection.

When Zé was seven years old, his family moved to Bom Jesus, a town approximately a hundred miles southeast of Rio Verde. This is where he grew to manhood.

Zé's knowledge of God was limited to the expressions of "thanks to God," "the Lord willing," etc., which he constantly heard people use. The absence of faith in his life was reflected in his attitude toward marriage. He believed that he would never get married, because he would never find the right person. He didn't realize that even in his unbelief, God was looking after him.

It wasn't until one day when riding his motorcycle and seeing he was going to be involved in an accident, that for the first time he called upon the name of the Lord—"Oh, my God!"

While living in Bom Jesus, Zé learned to know Viviene, his future wife.

Viviene's parents were separated and she grew up with her mother. Contrary to Zé, Viviene believed in God. Even though her mother didn't go to church, she insisted that Viviene attend mass every Sunday, which she faithfully did.

After Zé & Viviene had been going together for a year, they began going to church together. For Zé this probably wasn't as much an act of faith as of necessity. This would help pave the way to be able to get married in the Catholic church.

Zé wasn't impressed by what went on during mass, but began to like the midweek meetings when different ones would give talks. He even thought about buying a Bible, but decided that the Bible used for the midweek meetings would have to do.

After living in Bom Jesus for a number of years, Zé and his dad decided to move to Montevideu, a small town near Rio Verde. They found work on a farm. It wasn't an ideal situation and two weeks later Zé was without a job. This was a cruel blow since he and Viviene had already set their wedding date.

Desperately Zé began looking for a job in Rio Verde. The first thing in the morning he stopped at a shop that does electrical work on vehicles and farm equipment. Since they deal with a lot of farmers, he figured they might know of someone who was needing a hired man. The man told him he would do what he could to find him a job and that he should come back later in the day.

Not only do men looking for a job go to this kind of a shop. Farmers looking for a hired man do the same thing. About noon Jake Loewen stopped at the same shop to ask the owner if he knew of someone looking for work.

In just a short time the two men met and drove out to the farm so that Zé could look things over. It didn't take long and everything was agreed on. This was on June 3 and there were some busy days ahead. His wedding was set for the 14th. He would have to go to Bom Jesus and tell Viviene where she would be living, bring his furniture out to the farm, get the house cleaned up and find out what he should do on the farm during the next several months while Jake would be in the US.

Everything worked out. On the 13th Zé's dad came out to take his place while he got married the next day.

This was the beginning of a new day in Zé & Viviene's life.

On July 24th, the new couple came to one of our church services for the first time. Everything was so different from anything they had ever seen or heard, that, in Zé's words, "We didn't understand anything." To begin with, having everything said through an interpreter was a total mystery to them. On top of that it was a convert meeting. Janete Duarte, now married to Edinei Alves, told her experience. She went into detail and so it took a while. When she finished, as is custom, people asked questions. Zé said he wondered just what kind of a people this was that would get someone up front to make a speech and then begin to ask questions like a bunch of judges. He ends up by saying, "It just didn't make sense."

Once the meeting was over, things began to go better. People were very friendly and came and talked to them. They were impressed by the fact that no one tried to force their religion on them, but rather just invite them back.

Zé says that Jake would always invite them to church, so they decided to go every other Sunday morning. But as time went by, they began going every Sunday.

They bought a Bible and individually began having private prayers. But since they didn't know how to pray, they simply recited the Lord's Prayer. But there were problems. Zé says, "We thought married life would be a bed of roses, but I have a very difficult nature to put up with. Soon we were having a lot of problems. I didn't take things seriously."

Then came revival meetings, which they attended. He says, "Things got much better in our home. We began to open up to each other and to read the Bible together."

All this was good, but it wasn't salvation. It was, however, the necessary groundwork for the Lord to begin working with them on that which was most important.

Zé tells of a day when he was out working, "when suddenly my past came before me and I saw all the evil I had done. I didn't realize that this was condemnation for sin. Rather I saw myself as so undone that it wouldn't be proper to continue living in the midst of a pure people. I began to weep. It's still fresh in my mind. The field that I was working in was long and during two rounds I felt this strong condemnation. But then it slowly began to lift.

"Then one day at a wedding Elias Stoltzfus preached on the home and how the

husband should treat his wife. He told of his own experiences. This was a big help and Viviene and I decided to begin having prayer together before going to bed. In the beginning it wasn't easy. Also, we began to pray before meals.

"Then one day I happened to be at home by myself. I knew I wasn't at peace and in my heart I was searching. At bedtime I read my Bible and then knelt to pray. I confessed all my sins to God—everything I could remember. Then I went to bed.

"After this I felt peace. Right at the time I didn't realize that God had forgiven all my sins."

Zé tells of how the Spirit convicted him to straighten out things from his former life. I believe that this first incident took place before he found peace.

"One day I felt I should go back to Bom Jesus and talk to my sister and my folks. Some time before this I had had a real squabble with my sister. I didn't approve of her conduct with her boyfriend, so I gave her a bad time. Now I felt I should make things right, but it was very hard. Finally the chance came and I asked her to forgive me. She gladly did and said that she thought a lot of me in spite of what had happened.

"During the second series of revival meetings we attended, I remember one night when they gave an invitation. After a real struggle, I decided to stand and show my decision. Afterwards someone told me I had made the right decision. That made me feel good.

"The next evening the sermon was about the Holy Spirit. The meeting was almost over and I heard someone talking with me. I turned around to see who it was, but everyone was quiet. It was God who was talking with me.

"Another evening Sam Shirk had the sermon and he mentioned how that our decision will have an effect on our entire family. I remembered Viviene. Then we sang the song *Cristo vai hoje passar*. Even though I was converted, I stood again.

"But there was still something I had to clear up in my life. During the time I was at home, we worked for a rich farmer. My dad had a truck and one day I asked him why we didn't just fill it up with diesel from the farm tank some time when the owner wasn't around. My dad wouldn't consent to this, but one day when no one was around, I filled the tank. Also I borrowed a hydraulic jack and never returned it.

"It was when I was taking doctrine classes before baptism that I remembered these things. I knew right away that I would have to get things out in the clear. I told my dad about the jack and he said I should tell the man that I had forgotten to return it. But I told him that I would tell him the whole truth. And that is what I did. The man listened in silence to what I had to say. I told him that I had embarked on a new life. He said he would gladly forgive me and hoped that I would continue on this way."

Today if you come to the Monte Alegre Church, you will have the impression that Zé and Viviene grew up in the church. During supper the other evening, she fixed his plate and then he held the baby while he ate—a typically Mennonite gesture. In Sunday School he shows a good knowledge of the Bible.

We want to have them over again so that I can get Viviene's story more in detail.

We often say that we can't all be missionaries. That's very true. But maybe we can move to a new location. The decision to found a new settlement and to become part of

that move, should be taken very seriously. It would be just as wrong for a carnal couple to become part of such a move as it would be for a carnal couple to go to the mission field.

We can't put a price on a soul (simply because it is worth more than the whole world), but we do recognize that on some mission fields it costs more than on others to bring the gospel to the hungry. Seen from this perspective, colonization projects are the cheapest mission posts we have.

So if you would like to help in this great work, but don't know how, consider moving to a new area.

Especially if you're from Lone Tree. ▲

Brasília

Polikicks

Polikicks is when politicians are caught taking kickbacks. Here in Brazil the amazing thing isn't that it is done, but that they are actually being caught and exposed. More and more this means the end of their political career, which, after all, for many politicians is one of the most severe punishments that can be imposed.

Recently some 200 million reais of bogus bonds were sold that involved kickbacks at all levels. An ex-governor of São Paulo, a very influential politician, who hoped to run against president Fernando Henrique Cardoso in the next presidential elections, is being involved. If the charges stick, they will be his political death knoll.

On a municipal level, the press is using a lot of first page ink to expose mayors who are hiring relatives as aids. Until now this has been so commonplace that most people didn't pay any attention—even though everyone knew that most of the time it was a form of corruption. It doesn't appear the press will be calling off their hounds for a while. Readers are enjoying it too much.

In a country where corruption by the rich has been the scourge of the poor, this exposure is a positive sign. Officials are recognizing that so long as corruption is rampant, foreign investments will be kept at a minimum. On the other hand, the potential that Brazil has, if a certain amount of honesty can be restored, the sky is the limit on what can happen here. ▲

This & That

No, we have not discontinued the This & That column. We didn't have very many last month and the story included at the end fit just perfectly. So that's what you got.

Since meetings, we have four deacons at the Monte Alegre Congregation. The Rio Verdinho Congregation has no active deacons, so it only made sense that we loan them one of ours. Duane Holdeman ended up being the draftee.

Brazil ¹⁴ News

Tobe Koehn from Burns and Brian Isaac from Sinclair, were the evangelists at the Rio Verdinho Cong. for revivals this year. They made a good team. In the more than three quarters of a century Tobe has tread this earth, circling it several times (by plane), he has picked up a lot of down-to-earth experience that is of tremendous value in a revival effort. Brian grew up in Mexico and is closely tied to its people, language and culture. This is a big plus for ministers coming to Brazil. We hope they can come back.

We are getting the church registration in order so that we can register on both a national and a congregational level. Once the national registration is through, we can also register our bookstore. The Publication Board suggested, and the congregations approved, that it be Publicadora Menonita.

On February 25 Stacy & Jeanette Schmidt had a little boy, Patrick Leigh.

Corn harvest is over and approximately half of the soybeans are cut. Yields are somewhat below average. There are several reasons for this. Even though our rainfall wasn't more than usual, there were too many cloudy days. Also, new disease resistant varieties of beans were planted. Some of them also seem resistant to good yields. On the positive side, the price of beans is real good, which helps make up for the lower yields. As soon as fields are harvested, farmers are right in there planting a second crop, which is either corn or milo. No-till and minimum-till are definitely coming in. The second crops are look beautiful. Some corn is beginning to tassel.

We reported in BN no. 69 that Country Kitchen has been in business for two years. It's only one year, according to Susie. After staying open until midnight nearly every night, it probably seems like two years. Ya, Susie?

On February 27, Sid & Irene got (not had) a little girl, Janell Rose. This is the third child they have gotten. All I can say is that they are some fortunate little children.

Some of you will remember the article in BN no. 50, about Sebastião & Zezé's wedding in Pirenópolis. On the 27th, the same day Sid & Irene got their baby, Sebastião & Zezé had a baby. (This is getting complicated.) His name is Felipe.

Staven & Adeline Schmidt are the youth leaders at the Monte Alegre Congregation. Since the youth group is large and since Staven was ordained to the ministry, it was decided to have a second couple to share the load. Leo & Mim Dirks were chosen.

On March 7, the Burns clan and some former Mexico missionaries put on a churrasco for the Rio Verdinho revival ministers. Even better than the grilled meat was the afternoon we spent together.

Staff members who went to Annual Meeting this year were: Dean & Esther Lou Mininger, Harold & Irene Holdeman, and Jesse & Delores Loewen.

On March 10, William & Miriam Coblentz, the missionaries in Mirassol, São Paulo had a little girl, Felícia Beth.

Elias Stoltzfus and Duane & Frances Holdeman spent almost two weeks in the Northeast visiting the missions in Acaraú and Patos.

On March 13, the Monte Alegre Congregation ladies had a baby shower for Janete, Mrs. Edinei Alves.

On March 15, the Selecta seed company had a field day at Jair da Costa's place. In

spite of not being farmers, Jair graciously invited us anyway. I can't tell you anything about the seed that was being promoted, but folks the churrasco was mighty good. Three cheers for Selecta churrascos.

On March 17, kindergarten classes began at the Monte Alegre School. The teacher for the seven English students is Miss Keleda Loewen. In addition to her normal classes, Mrs. Cláudia Gold is teaching the two Portuguese students.

On March 17, the Boa Esperança School in Mato Grosso began classes in their new church/school. I understand it's a wooden structure, something common in Mato Grosso. The teacher is Miss Brenda Hibner. She has five students. Someday they will very likely have a better and larger church—and school too. But this dual building will always have a special place in their heart.

While Keleda is teaching kindergarten, Marion Unruh is taking her place in the tract room on Tuesdays, when tracts are packaged.

On March 19, Sérgio & Katrina Alves had a boy, Rendall Wade. Katrina asked that I make no comments about her baby until I have actually seen it. I haven't, so that's that.

Christ & Edna Stoltzfus, who have been living here for the last approximately six months, have returned to the US. The little birdies that sit on the vine say they may just be back sometime. If they don't, it won't be for lack of a welcome mat.

Pisciculturists here on the Colony have their heyday during lent when Brazilians traditionally eat fish. I say "traditionally," because I think the religious significance of this act has largely been lost—fortunately. Until now no one has made a lot of money raising fish, but a lot of experience has been gleaned. I really believe that the day will come when those involved in this activity on the Colony will get together and set up a modern fish market in town. It should be a success. Stacy Schmidt invited us over the other day to see their operation. I was impressed. Especially by the two catfish they sent home with us. Fixed on coals, you can't ask for anything better.

Karla Holdeman is spending a few months in Georgia working in a restaurant.

On March 24, kindergarten classes began at the Rio Verdinho School. There are six English students, with Roxie Schultz as the teacher.

Wilbert & Arlene Giesbrecht and Abe & Vera Schartner were here for a visit.

When you folks go off daylight saving time in the US, there will be two hours difference between our area of Brazil and CST in the US. When it's 10:00 p.m. there, it will be midnight here.

In the Perdigão poultry and hog project that is coming into the area, a German company has been chosen to furnish the equipment and supervise the building of their installations. Right directly they want to have a meeting here on the Colony to tell us what will be involved in working for them and what kind of returns can be expected. Then a trip is being planned to southern Brazil to give people a first hand view of their setup.