

Brazil News



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Editorial

Job and the Rich Young Ruler

Job and the rich young ruler never knew each other. Their lives were separated by many centuries. It is believed that Job and Abraham lived contemporaneously, or nearly so. The rich young ruler, whose name we don't know, lived during the time of Jesus. Both of these men teach us profound lessons on what it means to give—or not give—all.

Job gave all. It can of course be argued that Job didn't give anything, that Satan took everything he had. True. But when you get right down to it, when something is taken from us, we have the option, in our heart, of giving or keeping that which we have lost.

To understand this, we will transpose the places of Job and Boj (as we shall call the rich young ruler) in history.

One day while Boj is sitting in his office tent, looking after the affairs of his empire, he becomes aware of a commotion outside. The dogs are barking and the servants begin shouting. Their voices are filled with alarm. As he steps out of the tent to see what is going on, he sees one of his foremen, responsible for the field work, approaching. His face is contorted with fear. Falling down before his master, he gasps for breath.

Boj knows something serious, very serious has occurred. "What's up? Tell me, quick!" he demands.

Between gasps, the man manages to tell his story. "We were out plowing . . . with the oxen. . . The donkeys were grazing in a nearby field . . . when all of a sudden . . . without warning. . . the Sabeans fell upon us . . . We couldn't do anything. . ." Burying his face in his hands, the man sobs. "They killed all the men. . . and stole every single ox and donkey. . . Only I escaped."

Now it is Boj's turn to feel faint. He too gasps. A terrible loss. Five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred donkeys. And all his hand-picked men.

News spreads fast. People come running from all directions. The widows of the oxen tenders are wailing hysterically.

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Then a commanding voice is heard. "Silence! Step aside! Let him through!"

A narrow corridor is opened and one of the shepherds comes stumbling up to the tent. His eyes are wide with fear. Boj demands, "What happened? Tell me quick!"

"A lightning storm... a terrible storm unlike any before..."

Boj grabs him by the arm and shouts, "What happened, man? Out with it?"

"The sheep... Not one is alive... All of the shepherds are dead too... except for me."

The wailing breaks out again, this time heightened by the voices of the shepherd's widows. Boj is almost beside himself. Several of his trusted servants have their arms around him. Before he can calculate what the loss of seven thousand sheep will do to his operation, there is another shout, "Someone else is coming... and it looks like he too has bad news."

He does. "We were out watching the camels... when all of a sudden... a heavily armed bunch of Chaldeans... were upon us. I managed to hide behind a bush... but all the rest of the herdsmen were killed... They took all the camels."

More widows. More wailing. As his servants carry him into his office, Boj moans, "Bankrupt! I'm broke. I'm done for."

One of the servants attempts to comfort him, "You still have your family. If you all pull together, you'll get on your feet again."

And then the decibels outside the tent decrease again as someone shouts, "Let him through. Take him to the tent."

The door flap opens and several servants half drag a man in. Almost inaudibly he begins, "A tornado!... It hit the house where your children and their spouses were having a get-together... They're all gone... everyone of them... All their servants were killed... I'm the only one who came through the thing alive."

Boj is now a deathly white. His inert body twitches. Someone calls for the physician. But before medical help arrives, he suddenly springs from the couch where his servants are desperately fanning him. They try to pull him down, but he shakes them off. He roars like a wounded animal. He curses...

All has been taken. Yet he has given nothing.

We now move through the centuries and visit the home of a rich young ruler called Job.

By all human logic, Job should be the happiest man in town. He is young, he is influential, he is rich, and he is highly respected. Parents tell their children that they must be good so that they will grow up to be like Job.

Job is a religious man. He never misses a meeting in the synagogue. He gives a tenth of all his earnings to the Lord. He is conscientious about keeping the entire law. And he's not a hypocrite. When he's out on a business trip, where no one knows him, his behavior is just as faultless as at home. Job is a good man.

But Job isn't a truly happy man. No, he doesn't go around with a long face. He enjoys life. He doesn't complain. Why would he complain? He enjoys running his empire and making money. If he didn't, he wouldn't work like he does. But way down deep in his soul, something is lacking. And he knows it.

Job and his young wife are devoted to each other. One evening while sitting on the veranda watching the sunset, he eases into the subject. “Dear, are you happy?”

The question surprises her. “Of course, I’m happy. Aren’t you?”

“Yes, I’m happy. I enjoy having you as my wife. I enjoy working. I enjoy life in general . . .” Here he pauses for a long minute. Anxiously his wife looks at him. “But down deep in my heart I feel uneasy. I don’t know how to explain it. When I’m with you I don’t notice it. When I’m out working, I don’t notice it. When I’m with my friends, I don’t notice it. But when I’m all alone, then I feel lonely. I feel like I lack something.”

Job’s wife is deep in thought. She is about to say that she has felt something similar, when her husband continues. “I have felt like this for some time. But do you know when it began to get worse? A friend of mine was out by the beach one day when a man by the name of Jesus was teaching the people about how they should live. He stopped and listened. Apparently this Jesus said things like: ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.’ Things like that he said. And do you know, ever since I heard what this Jesus said, I’ve wanted to meet him. I’d like to ask him why I’m not totally happy. Everyone envies me, but no one knows what I am feeling inside.”

“He’s in town right now, isn’t he?” Job’s wife asked.

“I have heard that he is. Do you suppose there would be any harm in going and talking to him?”

“Of course not. I think you ought to. After all, you do need to be happy.”

When Job reached Jesus, as usual the Master was surrounded by people. But seeing him approach, everyone stepped aside. This was Job, the rich young ruler.

Feeling ill at ease because of the differential treatment the crowd was giving him, Job didn’t waste words. He asked, “Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?”

Jesus was equally direct. “Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”

Wondering if maybe there could be some hidden commandment which he had ignored, he asked, “Which?”

Jesus said, “Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, honour thy father and thy mother: and, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

No, there was no hidden commandment which he had ignored. “All these things have I kept from my youth up . . .” Job could have stopped here, thanked the Master, returned home and said, “Dear, I talked to Jesus and found out that I’m right on course. I guess I was worrying over nothing.”

That isn’t what happened. In all honesty, he asked, “What lack I yet?”

Then came the memorable answer, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.”

As Job slowly walked home, his mind was traveling much faster than his legs. By the time he reached the front gate, he knew exactly what he would tell his wife.

She was waiting inside the gate. One look at his face told her he had seen Jesus. Something had happened. Inquiringly she looked at him.

“Dear, we’re going to sell out.”

“What do you mean?”

“We’re going to sell out—everything.”

“Everything?”

“Everything.”

“You mean our farms, our businesses, our cattle, our sheep, our horses and carriages, our house...?”

“Everything.”

“And then what?”

“We’ll have treasures in heaven.”

“And then what?”

“And then we’ll go see what Jesus has for us to do.”

Job sells all that he has. And yet has lost nothing.

We find interesting parallels in the lives of Job and the rich young ruler. Both had vast holdings. Both were powerful. Both were conscientious. To their fellows, both were icons of success.

But there was one difference, a difference which would show up only when they were asked to give up all.

We all agree that a basic requirement for following Christ is to give up all. What we’re unsure about at times, is just what that means. For Job and the rich young ruler all meant all. In Job’s case, it would have seemed more logical if the first runner would have said, “All of your oxen, except for 50 yoke, and all of your donkeys, except for 50 of them, have been stolen.” The second runner should have said, “All of your sheep, except for 500 of them have been struck by lightning.” And, “The Chaldeans have hauled off with all of your camels, except for 200 of them.” And so on. That way he would have still had a way to make a living. Then his three friends could have accused him, “See, you were too big an operator and the Lord wanted to teach you a lesson.” They might have been right.

In the rich young ruler’s case, if the Lord would have told him to sell everything, except for what he needed to make a reasonable living, we would have liked it better. Let’s put it like this. We can understand when the Lord asks us to give up everything spiritually. But financially that’s a different story. We just assume that He means for us to be willing to give up everything, to have our natural things as though we had them not.

The objective of this article isn’t to suggest that to give all to the Lord means we must auction off everything we own. Rather, when we feel way down deep that there is a lack in our life, or when the church points out such a lack, we should honestly ask the Lord, “What lack I yet?” and then accept His answer without any amendments or arguments.

It's not likely He will ask us to sell out lock, stock and barrel. But let's face the facts. That's exactly what He did with Job and the rich young ruler. Can you think of a single reason why God wouldn't have the right to do the same to us?

Think of the blessings God's people would enjoy if they would all place not only their spiritual lives on the altar, but their financial lives as well. If, no matter what He would ask of us, we like Job could unconditionally accept His total will, our latter end would be more blessed than our beginning.

So long as we find victory in becoming willing to give all, and then feeling we are justified in not doing so, we too will go away sorrowful. ▲

Paulo David's Column

Straining at a Gnat and Swallowing a Camel

Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. —Joshua 1:7

Whenever I read this passage about not turning to the right hand nor to the left, it reminds me of the two extremes into which we can fall on the narrow way of truth. On the right we have legalism and on the left liberalism.

I believe that most of us have seen these tendencies, not only in the world, but right in our own circles. This isn't news to anyone and much has been written about the dangers of both ditches. Furthermore, we find it quite easy to identify these tendencies in the lives of others. We say that this one is sort of legalistic. And that one is quite liberal. At times we may discuss at length which ditch is more dangerous. Some declare up and down that liberalism is the greater danger because it gives vent to the flesh and tends toward worldliness. Can we then conclude that legalism is the safer route?

It's true that legalism makes us appear to be rigidly disciplined, or to be extremely spiritual. But behind all that, what is it trying to hide?

I would like for us to look at legalism from a new perspective. Let's turn it inside out and find out what it is that brings it on.

Many times it is in the term itself—legalism—that we get our first misconception of what it is. So I would like to propose that we change the term “legalism” to “camouflaged liberalism.” Then we will find that we have two kinds of liberalism: open liberalism and camouflaged liberalism.

But why this new name?

I will explain. If we pay close attention to a typical legalist, we will notice that his legalism is used to hide liberal tendencies in different areas of his life. It functions like a smokescreen to cover up a spirit of permissiveness.

Legalism then becomes a form of deceit, or shall we say, a case of chronic hypocrisy, which, while meant to deceive others, ends up deceiving the deceiver.

A father at home can be a rigid, domineering moralist, who exacts perfection from his children, and at the same time permit very doubtful things in his own life.

In Matthew 23:4, speaking about the Pharisees, Jesus describes very well the attitude of a camouflaged liberal: “For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”

This same tendency shows up in questions of doctrine and practice. I’ll give an example. We know that the Bible teaches that it is shameful for a woman to cut her hair. This is what the Bible teaches and what the church believes and practices. But for the legalist, this isn’t enough. He goes beyond this and feels that a scissors shouldn’t even come close to a woman’s hair and criticizes anyone who wouldn’t see it exactly like this. Why? Because many times he is trying to cover up other areas in his own life, which can include noncompliance with certain doctrines. It’s as though disobedience in one area can be compensated by rigorous obedience in another. Jesus says in Matthew 23:23, “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

Someone overtaken by this spirit in his life may be critical of others, but try to cover it up by wearing clothes that go far beyond the standard of simplicity set by the church. He may even see himself as a model Christian.

Not everything that a legalist defends is wrong in itself. What he says may be ever so right, but it’s his attitudes and motives that indicate a lack of God’s grace in his life. Down deep, it is exactly this lack that he is desperately trying to cover up.

All of this should be a warning to us. If we begin to notice (although usually others have to help us see this) an unbalance in the way we look at certain doctrines or practices, we should take a good look at our life to find out if we’re not trying to hide a more serious problem.

We see religious groups that shun automobiles, electricity, telephones, giving the appearance of strict separation from the world. But these same groups tolerate smoking, drinking, carnal courtship, and many other things.

The camouflaged liberal is in a dangerous situation. Like Adam, he tries to cover his spiritual nakedness with wilted fig leaves and by hiding himself among the trees, all the time pointing his finger at others and not seeing his own condition.

No! Neither the declared liberal nor the camouflaged liberal find true happiness. The secret is to be faithful—faithful in all things, faithful by the grace of God, being a Christian with a balanced faithfulness.

When Jesus came across the fig tree without fruit, if it wouldn’t have had leaves either, instead of cursing it and causing it to dry up, he probably would have blessed it and new leaves would have come forth, and then fruit.

If we would be truly happy, we must serve the Lord in Spirit and in truth. ▲

Your Brethren Write

by Jorge José da Silva

The Danger of Debts

[Jorge is not a wealthy man. Some would probably feel he is poor. Read his article and decide for yourself if he is rich or poor. (If you enjoy what he has to say, read BN issues 22-24, in which he tells his life's story.)]

When we moved to the state of Mato Grosso, I had some outstanding bills which I didn't pay simply because I didn't have money. But the day came in which some of the brethren advised me to try and get these bills taken care of. Things worked out and soon I was debt free. This has been a real blessing, because when I go to bed my sleep is sweet.

What I would like to relate is a dream that I had on January 29, 1998. It was on this day that I received my Mensageiro no. 345, which ended with a plea for Brazilian brethren to write articles for this paper. Immediately I thought that I should tell this dream, which I want to do to God's honor and glory.

In my dream I was in a little town where there was a cattle auction. All of the area butchers were there to buy up the cattle that would be sold.

I was walking through there when I became curious to know what kind of cattle were being sold. So I got up near the pens and began looking around. Imagine my surprise when I found that instead of cattle, those pens were full of men, women and children. I was told that they would be auctioned off by the arroba [equivalent to 15 kilos (33 pounds), a common weight unit used by cattlemen]. They would be slaughtered and sold in the local butcher shops, for the people of that town consumed human flesh. I also found out that the reason they were being sold was that they had debts which they were unable to pay.

I awoke with a start. I don't know if I slept again. I do know though that I clearly saw a brother with his wife and dear children in one of the pens. This brother had a debt which he was unable to pay. I heard him say to his creditor, "Then take my son." But the creditor didn't accept the offer. So they weighed all the children, the wife, and the man himself, but by figuring the going price per arroba, it still didn't cover the debt.

This really shook me up. So I went over to where they were and tried to intercede for the brother and his family.

Now I would like to ask: Why do we have debts? I know that this question has a lot of answers. One says that he is in debt because of medical bills. Another says he had a poor harvest. Each one has a reason.

Some time ago one brother admonished another because of his heavy debt load. Bill collectors were constantly knocking on his door. This brother excused himself by saying, "The Brazilian government owes all kinds of money, so why shouldn't I owe?"

I also heard a woman say, “What my husband owes is his business. My children and I aren’t going to suffer on account of his poor management.” She goes on shopping sprees and pays with predated checks, buys on time or with their credit card, increasing their debt even more.

Now isn’t it true that if my dream would suddenly become a reality and insolvent debtors would be auctioned off to butchers, we would be more careful about making debts? Dear reader, if you find yourself in a difficult situation, read Proverbs 15:16, where it says, “Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith.” In the same book, chapter 17, verse 1, we read, “Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.”

We can learn a lot from these verses. We see people who aren’t satisfied with a little and soon their life is filled with trouble. In the case of the housewife who believes she has no responsibility to help her husband by keeping expenses down, that home is headed for serious trouble. On the other hand, the family that is satisfied with a dry morsel will find many blessings. When these problems are taken to the Lord, He shows a way of escape.

Pray for me that I will never find myself in this kind of a situation. Rather I want to always be willing to do God’s will and one day have a home in heaven together with those who didn’t love the ways of the flesh, but walked in the way of the Lord. ▲

By Dalva Pereira da Silva

God Hath Dealt Graciously with Me

[Now we will listen to what Jorge’s wife has to say. She and Jorge are pioneers in the new settlement in the state of Mato Grosso.]

God hath dealt graciously with me, and... I have enough. —Genesis 3:11

I would like to tell some experiences I had a year ago. My husband was always quite healthy, but when we moved to Mato Grosso all that changed. One day while I was working, I sighed a prayer to God asking Him that He would “remake”—that was the only term I could think of at the time—my husband.

Instead of things getting better, they got worse. Jorge was in a motorcycle accident and had to have surgery. I was so beside myself when this happened that I even forgot that God has promised to take care of us. I began blaming everything and everybody.

Believing that he would soon be coming home from the hospital and things would get back to normal, I saw just a ray of hope. He did come home, but kept getting worse instead of better. He ended up in the hospital again.

My three children and I prayed a lot. At different times I saw my three year old son

bow his head and pray. This was a great encouragement to me. My biggest struggle, though, was with a spirit of rebellion.

I was a Sunday school teacher in one of the children's classes. It was through the memory verse from Genesis 33:11 that Satan began attacking me. He asked me in what way God had dealt graciously with me? My husband was sick and we were out of everything.

While Jorge was in the hospital, the doctor did some tests and found out what it was that had been causing so many of his health problems. She put him on the proper medication. So it was through his motorcycle accident that he found help for his other physical problems. That is how God dealt graciously with us.

Even as I began to understand that God dealt graciously with us, the spirit of rebellion continued to torment me. Finally one day when a minister and a deacon were visiting our congregation, I opened my heart to them. They told me that all things that come from above are for our welfare. Now my heart accepted this and I began to remember other things that the Lord permitted in my life that proved that truly He had been dealing graciously with me and that truly I have enough, as the verse says. It's true that we don't have riches, nor do we live in luxury, but we have enough. ▲

A Brazilian Story

by Mário de Moraes

Only To My Own Wake

[In most countries of the world, there is an elapse of 24 hours or less between death and burial. Normally the body is kept in the home during this period, known as a wake, which frequently takes the place of a funeral, as we know it.]

Most everyone goes to a wake—except for Januário Batista. He had no use for wakes. In his town of São Sebastião, in the state of Minas Gerais, you would never see Januário at a wake.

“The only wake I expect to attend is my own. In fact, I don't suppose I could get out of that one, even if I wanted to. But go to someone else's wake, never! Why would I want to stay up all night and listen to a bunch of people cry? You go and I'll stay.” That was his attitude.

He didn't even go to the wake of his own relatives. When one of them would happen to die, he would find some excuse to leave town and return only after everything was over.

Then one day Colonel Furtado, an important figure, died. “This time you won't get by with staying home,” a friend told him.

“And just why won't I?”

“Because Colonel Furtado was a highly respected man in the community. It would be very much out of place for anyone not to go to the wake.”

“Even so, I’m not going.”

“There is going to be plenty of coffee, home-brew, and even churrasco [grilled meat].”

“Maybe there will be, but the only wake I plan on going to is my own.”

Others tried to convince him. “The food and drink are out of this world . . .”

“That may all be, but if I want to drink, I can do so at home. If I want something good to eat, I have plenty to eat there too.”

Januário didn’t go, and several days later he disappeared without a trace. His relatives and friends became worried. They checked out the hospital, the jail, but he seemed to have disappeared into thin air.

The local police searched all the woods around town, but no sign of Januário anywhere . . .

Until one day a body was found near town and taken to the morgue. Friends and family members rushed over to identify the body. There, cold in death, they found their loved one.

Januário was placed in a casket and taken home for the wake. Standing in little circles, they reminisced about their departed friend.

“He was a good guy, but stubborn as an ox,” one said. “He hated wakes. I doubt if he would have showed up at his own mother’s wake.”

“He always said that he would only go to his own wake—and that because there was no way of getting out of it,” his uncle said, who was in on the conversation.

It was at this exact moment that Januário showed up. His eyes bulging in surprise, he exclaimed, “Holy Virgin Mary! Has someone died around here?”

Total silence. Many of those present looked like they were about to go into a swoon. The man standing there was Januário Batista, in flesh and blood, and very much alive. Some of the mourners looked as though they were about to dash out into the street. But those who managed to keep their heads in place soon realized that somewhere a mistake had been made.

The mistake, as they soon found out, was the result of an incredible coincidence. The body found and taken to the morgue was the victim of a hit-and-run accident. Not only was there a marked similarity between the dead and the living, but the clothes the victim was wearing were the same as Januário was using when last seen. And the fact that the body in the morgue was somewhat disfigured made the confusion complete.

Januário explained to those present that he had to make an unexpected trip to Rio de Janeiro, which accounted for his absence. And even though he was corporally alive, legally he was dead. It took him some time to get his death certificate annulled.

In one of the circles, someone commented, “This Januário is really a character. When he said the only wake he would attend was his own, he wasn’t just joking. And he didn’t even have to die to do it.” ▲

Perdigão

As reported in **O Popular**

An Update

Perdigão plans on investing US\$48 million this year in the industrial complex it is setting up in Rio Verde. Construction will begin in April and most of the money allotted for this year is designated for the purchase of equipment. When in full production in the year 2003, it will be the largest industrial complex in Latin America with a gross yearly income of US\$600 million. It will require 450 thousand metric tons of corn and 150 thousand metric tons of soybean meal per year.

The total investment for the Buriti Project, as it is known, will be US\$470 million, of which Perdigão will put up US\$320 million and local producers and truckers US\$150 million. The bulk of the investment will be made in 1999, when the factory will be near completion and the incubators will be built. Last year the company spent US\$5 million getting the project down on paper and on land leveling.

[The first batch of hogs] should be slaughtered in January of 2000. To make this possible, 60 people will be hired in Rio Verde and moved to Perdigão headquarters in Videira, in the State of Santa Catarina, where they will be trained for two years. Local producers will take a course at the university in Rio Verde.

In October of this year, 35 thousand farrowing sows will be distributed among the local raisers.

Perdigão is going to have an impact on an area much larger than Rio Verde as other related industries come in. An example is Sperotto, an Italian industry specialized in producing equipment for aviculture. ▲

Stories for Children (of all ages)

We Are Laborers Together With God



The Carpenter's tools had a conference. Brother Hammer was in the chair. The meeting had informed him that he must leave, because he was too noisy. But he said, "If I am to leave this carpenter shop, Brother Brace must go too. He is so insignificant and makes very little impression."



Little Brother Brace rose up and said, "All right, but Brother Screwdriver must go also. You have to turn him around and around again and again to get him anywhere."

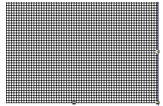


Brother Screwdriver then said, "If you wish I will go, but Brother Plane must leave also. All his work is on the surface. There is no depth to it."



To this Brother Plane replied, “Well Brother Rule will also have to withdraw if I do, for he is always measuring folks as though he were the only one who is right.”

Brother Rule then complained against Brother Sandpaper and said, “What about him? He is rougher than he ought to be, and he is always rubbing people up the wrong way.”

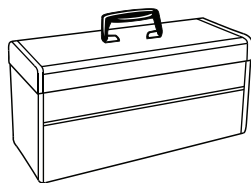


In the midst of the discussion the Carpenter walked in. He had come to perform his day’s work. He put on his apron and went to the bench to make a pulpit from which the gospel would be preached to the poor. He employed the screwdriver, the brace, the sandpaper, the saw, the hammer, the plane, and all the other tools.

After the day’s work was over and the pulpit was finished, Brother Saw arose and said, “Brethren, I perceive that all of us are laborers together with God.”



Oh! How many of us Christians are just like those tools, fussing at each other because the other fellow doesn’t do things just the way we think he should.



There was not an accusation against one of those tools that was not absolutely true, yet the Carpenter used every one of them. There was not a place where He used any one where any of the others would have done at all. Oh, how careful we should be in finding fault with one of God’s tools. —Selected ▲

The Security

“Is this the place where you lend money, Mister?”

The paying teller had to lean far over to see the owner of the clean, chubby hands and the pleasant, eager voice. “Why... er...” he stammered rather helplessly.

“Let the young man come in here, Sanders,” suggested the old gentleman in the fine upholstered room at the right, and the boy stepped forward with an unabashed confidence which was good to see.

“Now, sir, what do you want with money?” the bank president queried pleasantly as the boy paused beside his desk, declining the chair offered with a shake of the head and a quick:

“Thank you. I’m in a hurry.

“Y’see I’ve a chance to rent the little stall where Tony, the fruit man, has been, and Bill Carr and I are going to sell papers there, and have homemade pie, and sandwiches, and coffee—Granny is going to fix them for us.”

“Hmm! What becomes of Tony?”

“He is going up in the country to farm with his brother.”

“Ah! If we let you have the money, what security have you to offer?”

The boy’s expression showed that he did not understand, and the president made

haste to explain: “When we lend money,” he said, “we have to make sure that it will be paid. Usually we hold some of the borrower’s property until he can pay back.”

For a moment the lad stood in troubled thought. Then his face brightened and his hand went to his breast pocket. He took out a little package wrapped in oil cloth and tied with a faded ribbon. On being undone, a second wrapping of manilla was revealed, and beneath this a third covering of tissue—all of which the boy removed with much care. He at length laid a cheap photograph on the table before his questioner: “I promised her to make good,” he said reverently. “You may keep it till I bring you the money.” The boy said this with a sense of security.

Something seemed to be the matter with the president’s vision. He removed his glasses and wiped his eyes carefully. Then he looked long at the sweet face of the young mother, and the wavering child’s handwriting beneath: “Died, January 10, 1922.” Then after a few brief questions, he turned in his chair: “Sanders,” he called, “let this lad have twenty-five dollars, and charge it to my personal account.”

“Thank you, sir,” the boy said happily, but he did not turn away until he had carefully replaced the precious photograph in its many wrappings, and it was plain that he parted from it most reluctantly.

“I’m afraid you let your sympathy get away with you, John,” observed a friend.

“Not at all,” the president answered quickly. “We have many trusted securities in the vault yonder, not one half so valuable as the picture of this boy’s dead mother. He will make good. Someday the world will hear from him.” And it did. —Selected ▲

This & That

Eduardo Vieira da Silva returned from Mozambique where he spent six months teaching the missionaries Portuguese and helping in the work there. On Jan 24 he gave a report at the Monte Alegre Congregation. By the time he finished, we realized that not just anyone can be a missionary in Mozambique. (If Brazil is supposed to be a third world country, where in the world does that leave Mozambique?) Eduardo is encouraged with the work there.

In fact, if it wasn’t for his job here, I believe he would be ready to go back.

The Rio Verdinho Congregation revival meetings began on Jan 25. The evangelists were Doug Koehn and Danver Nichols. Their wives accompanied them. They had communion on Feb 4.

On January 25 Rio Verde Congregation (also known as the Town Congregation) had baptism. The work there continues to grow. The church is usually full, or nearly so, for services.

Those of you who are acquainted with the highway between Rio Verde and Brasília know that the stretch between Goiânia and Anápolis is four-lane. Now the Federal Government has announced that by the end of this year another 40 kilometers between Anápolis and Brasília will be widened into a four lane highway. Eventually the entire stretch from Brasília to Itumbiara is to be four lane.

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Sérgio & Katrina Alves have returned from the Patos mission where they were filling in. Sam & Erma Coblentz and son Frank returned to the US some months ago. The new missionaries are to come right directly.

Some things happen only in Brazil. We have at different times written about the agrarian reform and how that professional squatters invade farms in the hopes of getting a piece of ground for free. In most cases the land owners are furious. It isn't uncommon for there to be bloodshed. The new twist is that with a stable economy, people are no longer investing in land for speculative purposes like when inflation was rampant. Because of this land has come down between 30 and 40 percent in much of the country. And so now there are land owners who are secretly calling in squatters to invade their properties. Why? Because the price the government pays the landowner for land appropriated for agrarian reform is higher than the going market price. Yep, only in Brazil.

Domestic air fares are beginning to come down in Brazil. In the not too distant future a number of foreign carriers are expected to invade the domestic market. What would we do without competition?

Paulo & Valéria Rufino and daughter Vanessa from Patos were out for several weeks visiting family and friends. With a pediatrician daddy, the little girl ought to do OK. I don't know how many of you folks north of the Equator know it, but the US soccer team beat the Brazilian team in a David/Goliath performance. For a team who has won the world cup three times to be beat by a bunch of gringos is muito humilhante. Paulo & Valéria brought with them a youth sister from Patos, Rosemere Souza, who is confined to a wheel chair. Many of us had been looking forward to learning to know her. And she, doubtlessly, was anxious to learn to know the church in Goiás.

Sid & Irene Schmidt moved back to the farm after spending several years in Rio Verde as missionaries. Nelson & Ruth Unruh, who were living on their place, moved to the old Eldon Penner place near the Monte Alegre River.

Monte Alegre Congregation revival meetings began on Jan 28, with Leon Koehn and Jerry Haynes as the evangelists. Their wives accompanied them. Communion was on Feb 8.

Congress is in the process of overhauling the social security system. Last year it took in 44 billion reais and paid out 47. For such a system to function properly, there should be four paying in for every retiree. Here there are two paying in for each retiree. Three million retired government workers get 51% of all money paid out. The rest is divided among 17 million retirees. Last year 24 thousand workers less than 40 years of age managed to retire. Average retirement age in Brazil is 49. Twenty five billion reais are paid out annually to retirees who keep right on working, thus getting a double salary. To call this a mess could make one feel a bit guilty—for understating the truth.

The Monte Alegre Congregation put in new ceiling fans. The pretty kind that make hardly any noise. Bom, né?

The William Coblentz family returned to Brazil after spending some time in the US. Instead of returning to their former post in Mirassol, São Paulo, they will be going

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to Acaraú, in the Northeast. Lois Kaminski will be teaching their children. Daniel & Anna Kramer, the previous missionaries from Acaraú are helping them move and will be showing them the ropes over there.

On February 9 they had another baptism and a reacceptance (incidentally, that isn't a word) in Rio Verde.

The terminal of the Santos Dumont airport in Rio de Janeiro was destroyed by fire on Feb 13. This is the domestic airport, in the middle of town—not Galeão, the international airport.

BN tour group III has come and gone. It was made up of: Ervin & Salena Nichols, from Kansas; Gary & Carol Koehn, from Texas; Dennis & Jolene Koehn and children Monica and Ridgel, from Texas; Crist & Helen Unruh, from Alberta; Ernest & Alice Baerg, from Louisiana.

Visitors from Canada were: Milton & Margaret Warkentin and son David; Marlin & Kathy Warkentin and children Barbara, Coleen and Jonathan.

On Feb 15 we had a wedding here, oh man! Kent Holdeman from Georgia came here to marry Karla Holdeman. (Kent's folks are Robert & Barbara and Karla's are Daniel & Linda.) Being an international wedding, we had people galore at the Monte Alegre congregation (at least according to our humble standards). Those who came out for the wedding were: Robert & Barbara Holdeman and children Jonathan, Marcus, Craig and Rosalyn; Neil & Rosalie Holdeman (the groom's grandparents); Clay & Heidi Hiebert; Lee & Charlotte Unruh; Frank Koehn; Janna and Sherri Holdeman; Leon & Lenora Ensz (also grandparents to the groom); Michael Giesbrecht.

On February 14 all the youth had a churrasco at the dam.

The chartered sleeper bus that went to Foz de Iguacu was full. Beside the entire tour group, the Canadian company went and Leon & Leonora Ensz. From here Clifford & Naomi Warkentin and sons Kevin and Robert; and Marion Unruh.

Min. Mark Loewen is in N Dakota for meetings and Min. Elias Stoltzfus is in S Dakota.

Dave & Roxy Miller took a van load of visitors to Iguacu Falls.

now for the babies here goes harold & irene holdeman had a girl gayla joy on dec 20 arlo & priscilla hibner had a boy michael jay on jan 4 mervin & norma jean loewen had a boy justin lamont on feb 17 i'm about out of breath (and plumb out of punctuation)

The tour group was unable to visit the Pirenópolis congregation like the last group did. It's too bad. I understand that for some it was the highlight of their trip. The problem was the carnival holidays. Since Pirenópolis is a very tourist orientated town, the first problem was that there would have been no hotels with available rooms. And if there would have been, it still wouldn't have been advisable to be there during that time.

Seed, herbicide and fertilizer companies here in Brazil know that the best way to reach a farmer's pocket book is by way of the belly. So what they do is put on a field day, that

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includes a churrasco. It must work, because they keep on doing it, and each one tries to outdo the other. On Feb 12 there was a big field day at Daniel Holdemans and then on the 18th at Jair da Costa's place. I was in Brasília getting the tour group on the 12th, so I missed the first one, but made it to the second one. Was it goooooood! The churrasco.

On Feb 23 kindergarten started in both the Rio Verdinho and Monte Alegre schools.

The teacher at Rio Verdinho is Angela Martin. She has two students. At Monte Alegre the English teacher is Keleda Loewen. She has four students. The Portuguese teacher is Cláudia Neves. She has three students.

On February 25 the Monte Alegre Congregation had a mid-week Bible Study organizational meeting. Something like this is always sort of complicated here because of the two languages.

We have at different times mentioned the astronomical price that a telephone line costs here. At the worst it costs around US\$2,500 for the right to use a phone. Some people bought phones as an investment and rented them out for a hundred bucks a month. Someone with ten phones rented out had a good living, without doing a solitary thing. Over the last several years that has been changing. Right now it costs US\$50 for a phone line. Needless to say, no one is making a living anymore by renting out phones. By the end of the year there should be 12 million cellular phones in operation in Brazil.

So far all the tour groups have gone to Iguazu Falls. How about taking a cruise on the Amazon river next time? Before you get too excited, it's only fair to inform you it won't be cheap. But you'll never forget it.

The College of Cardinals today is made up of 165 cardinals, of which 134 have been appointed by Pope John Paul II. Since no cardinal who is over 80 is eligible to vote for a new pope, if an election were held today, only 122 would have the right to vote.