

Brazil News



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Editorial

The Adoption

What do the baggage claim area of an airport and the nursery of a hospital have in common?

A lot. Next time you are waiting to pick up your baggage in the airport, pay attention to what is happening. You see people crowded around the conveyer, necks craned, watching for the first piece of luggage to come wobbling through the little hole in the wall. Then as piece after piece come through and solemnly parade around, hands eagerly reach out and snatch them. Especially children may clap their hands and shout, "That's mine coming over there!"

Now go to the nursery in a large hospital. Watch the people looking through the glass window. Each one has his eyes riveted on a particular baby. Some point. "That one over there is mine." It's obvious that if the baby was on a conveyer, he would reach over and snatch it up.

As you wait for your baggage, you notice a particular suitcase or box that keeps going around and around. There is no one to claim it. Finally the last passenger leaves and the piece of luggage forlornly keeps making the rounds, until finally airport officials mercifully shunt it to the lost baggage department.

Sometimes in the nursery there is a child that no one seems to notice from the other side of the glass. No one points a finger at it and smiles and says, "That one is mine."

Unclaimed baggage.

We're not all that worried about what happens with unclaimed baggage in the airport. But it is somewhat disturbing to think of a child ending up as unclaimed baggage. Just going around and around . . .

That is where the similarities between a baggage claim and a nursery end. People don't go into an airport and ask if there are any unclaimed suitcases they can take home as their own. But there are those who go to the proper agency and ask if there is an unclaimed child that could be taken home.

Contrary to what we might believe, parents who receive a child through adoption are often just as excited as parents who have their own (and sometimes more so). And it's quite understandable. Usually parents who adopt a child are unable to have their own. One year after another goes past and the house remains empty. Furthermore, most adoption procedures can be compared to a difficult pregnancy (with the difference that here both parents share exactly the same pains). When the judge finally signs the adoption decree and a birth certificate is issued naming them as the legal parents, they are excited. They have every reason to be.

When parents adopt a child, they are obviously thinking of themselves. They feel their home is incomplete without children. This is good, but it must be more than that. Moved by compassion, they must feel a deep desire to give the child, or children, a chance in life. Especially the chance to be saved. A tremendous responsibility.

I have had the privilege of being present in a number of adoption procedures and seeing the joy of the adoptive parents when the child was finally theirs. But really, that isn't what this article is about.

We want to take a look at a different kind of adoption—a mass adoption, in which maybe fifty, a hundred, two hundred or three hundred “children” are adopted in one ceremony. It's really impressive. I know, because I've had the privilege of being present in a number of these adoption ceremonies.

So have you.

Just to refresh our memory, these ceremonies are always held in church. The “children” that are to be adopted sit in the benches. The “parents” sit on the front bench. After an address, usually directed to both the “children” and the “parents,” the one conducting the ceremony steps down from the rostrum and asks the prospective parents to stand. He asks the man some questions and then asks the wife if she will support her husband. They of course answer yes to everything.

And then, because of the impossibility of this couple doing what they have just promised to do, a prayer is made, asking God to empower them with a special grace to be parents to the multitude of children standing behind them.

It is significant that they don't face the children during the adoption ceremony, because they are to lead them. And to lead one must face ahead.

If it's a responsibility to adopt one child, or two, what word should we use when several hundred are adopted?

In this ceremony a strange thing happens, something that can never happen in a natural adoption. The one who takes the vows promises to adopt everyone, including his own father and mother, his brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, cousins, indeed, his own children (if they are members).

How can that be?

It is in a natural adoption that we find the answer. When the judge signs the adoption decree, giving the adoptive parents full legal rights to the child, by the same stroke of the pen he severs all ties between the child and it's biological parents (should they be alive).

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On several occasions Jesus gives us a glimpse of how that works. When beginning His ministry, He received an invitation to a wedding in Cana of Galilee. When His mother noticed that the wine was running low, she spoke to her son. Brusquely He responded, “Woman, what have I to do with thee?”

Another time, when informed that his mother and brothers and sisters wanted to talk with him, he answered, “Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?”

He answered His own question. “And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

Forcefully Jesus makes a point: Mary is the mother of Jesus the man, but not of Jesus the Minister. His brothers and sisters are related to Jesus the man, but not to Jesus the Minister. Never should His words be misconstrued as rudeness or indifference to His earthly family. Rather we should understand that they, like every human being, could only be saved by “the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”

This lesson doesn't only apply to the family, but to friends as well. The minister of the gospel doesn't have to give up his good friends. He doesn't have to turn his back on his relatives. But something has changed. A certain intimacy is lost. He used to tell mom everything. No longer can he do this. And if she tries to use her influence to sway him in his convictions, which he feels are of God, he may have to ask, “Woman, what have I to do with thee?”

When dad forgets that son, as a minister of the gospel, cannot reason with flesh and blood, a courteous reminder may be in order, “Man, what have I to do with thee?”

At times it may be brother or sister, uncle or aunt. It may be a childhood buddy.

In courts of law it isn't unusual for a judge to ask to be excused from a case because of a conflict of interest. Even though he might feel he could judge impartially, he is aware that others probably won't feel that way and that the case may be dismissed because of this. He wouldn't even consider presiding over a case that involved a close relative or friend.

The minister of the gospel does not have this prerogative. And he doesn't need it. If he has taken the adoption ceremony seriously, if he can look over his new flock and say, “These are my mother and father, my brother and sister, my best friends,” and do so impartially, he has before himself a wide open door to carry out his mandate.

When a couple have quintuplets or sextuplets, we wonder how they will handle such a load. But it's nothing compared to what a young couple faces, maybe in their late twenties, after they have taken their vows.

When you read your Messenger and get to the section on ordinations, don't ignore it just because the names are unfamiliar. Sigh a prayer. Not only once or twice, but frequently during the following days and weeks.

Pray for the young brother who must rise on Sunday and say something inspiring to the flock he has adopted. This can be a real challenge.

Pray for him as people come to him for advice so that he can know how to answer.

Pray for him as his gift grows that he will never forget that all increase comes from the Lord.

Pray for him when he gets slapped in the face. Not all the children he has adopted are well behaved, not all are always kind, not all give him due consideration as the servant of God.

Pray for him when he must deal with transgressors, so that his love will cause him to deal in justice and mercy.

Pray for him when he has done very well and people praise him instead of the Master. Help him then to remember the story of king Saul.

Pray for him that when he sees a piece of baggage going around and around, that he will be moved to compassion and try to rescue it before it is shunted to the lost baggage room.

Yes, pray for him that he will frequently visit the lost baggage department. Help him to feel that his “family” just isn’t complete while pieces of baggage are going round and round on the conveyor belt.

Pray for him that he may find joy in his labors. It has never been the Lord’s will that His servants should continually labor under stress and feel the load is too great.

The story is told of a wealthy father who always prayed for the missionaries. One day his little girl told him, “Dad, if I had as much money as you do, I’d be able to answer some of my own prayers.”

And you, good reader, if you’re really concerned about your adoptive fathers, don’t only pray for them. Treat them like you like to be treated by your own children and you will answer some of your own prayers. ▲

Paraguay

By Edwin Schmidt, chapter III

Voluntary Service in Paraguay

Hotel Electra was a nice hotel with clean rooms and beds. I believe the Lord had gone before to make a way for me, or better said, for us. Here I arrived in one of the bigger cities of the world, a stranger at a place I had never seen before, going through customs in a rather dimly lit room, and then late at night be told, “It’s going to be difficult to find lodging tonight.” Often the thought has come: How would it have been that night if it had not been for friendships that were made during the trip? Here a need was filled because of it. But is that not the way God works to help fill our needs?

The inauguration of President Peron was three days after the election and this caused another problem. Because of the election and inauguration the country had a week’s celebration, and business and government offices were closed. I couldn’t get a ticket to take the river boat for the last part of my trip. Another seven days were lost in waiting.

Before parting ways at Buenos Aires, the crew member who came many times to talk after the end of his work shift, told me he was going to come see me sometime. He said when he came back into port from a trip, there were times that the next trip out would be on a ship on the opposite side of the U.S. “On that trip across the States I’m going to come by to see you.” I told him he would be very welcome. He did send notice one time that he was coming to see me. But just at that time I had left for Mexico for six weeks. My family let him know so I never did see him again, which I regretted. What would another visit with him have been like?

The professor lived in the western part of Argentina and was able to get transportation right after inauguration, which was four days. The Cuban stayed in Buenos Aires and found an apartment a day or two after the professor left. After that I spent a number of days by myself. By this time I knew the city well enough to get where I needed and wanted to go.

On June 8 I left for Asuncion, Paraguay, on a nice river boat. It was a thousand mile trip and took about three and a half days. The traveling was nice and smooth and the people friendly. It was a good trip.

Upon arriving at Asuncion on June 12, there were a number of the MCC workers from the Mennonite Center to meet me. They’d had much rain and the river was at flood stage. Among the MCC workers were two young men I knew from CPS days. The MCC had not been able to get the work on the Leper Colony started. For one thing, there was too much red tape. It didn’t look like it would get started soon. With the Paraguay River flooding, the poor people who lived along the river were the first to get flooded out. Refugee centers were opened by the government to take care of them. The living conditions were poor, with also a lack of bedding. The MCC made arrangements to start a supplemental feeding program for children and also supplied some blankets. I helped with this work. Since this wasn’t a full time work, I also helped with a little maintenance work at the Center and had some more time for Spanish and Bible study.

After the middle of September, the feeding program ended. In the meantime there was investigating done about a site for a leper colony. A favorable site was found. A rather new leper colony was visited. The Paraguayan government had built this colony with the help of the United States. But negotiations with the Paraguayan government and coming to an agreement was a slow process for the MCC.

As is common in poor countries, there were health problems because of poor sanitation. In southeast Paraguay one of these was the intestinal infestation of hookworm. This is caused by not taking proper care of human waste, when proper toilet facilities are not made and children, especially, not using them at all. The hookworm eggs in human waste hatch and infest the ground. At a certain stage of development when very small, it can get in through a crack, cut, or opening in the skin and get into the blood stream. By this means it gets into the lungs. When coughed and swallowed it passes through the stomach. By the time it gets into the intestines it has developed into a worm with a hook by which it fastens itself to the intestinal wall and

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sucks out the nutrients meant to feed the human body. Here the round of infestation begins all over again. The 60-90 inches of rain in southeastern Paraguay is very conducive to spreading the infestation of the ground. Being warm, many people walked barefoot which was also very conducive for infestation.

The Mennonite colony of Friesland is located in this part of Paraguay. These people came from the colony of Fernheim in the Chaco of northwest Paraguay. With the infestation of hookworm, the MCC had started a hookworm eradication program here and also in the neighboring Paraguayan village of Itacurubi. After being in Asuncion some over three months, I was assigned to help with this work.

There were two phases to this work. One was to teach the people what caused the infestation of the ground and how to avoid it by constructing proper toilets, using them, and maintaining them. They were advised to wear shoes, or at least sandals, as most of the infestation was through breaks in the skin of the feet. The other phase was how to be rid of the bodily infestation by taking proper medication.

For the people of Itacurubi who cooperated with the program, the MCC offered some help with the costs of construction of sanitary toilets. The people needed to do the work. It was a round, locally burnt brick, structure with a cement floor sealed off so no rain water could get in to fill it up and run it over. The hole was also laid out with bricks. Of course, a door and roof were added. The medication program consisted of getting a small stool specimen from each individual. This was liquefied with water so the worm eggs floated on top. This was put under a microscope and the kind and amount of infestation could be determined. After the analysis had been made, a medication was given to kill the worms. Then 24 hours later a purgative was taken to clean out the dead worms.

Beside the hookworm there were also some roundworm, tapeworm, and pinworm infestation. The program we used worked well, except for the tapeworm which was more difficult to kill. We were three MCC men working together on this project. One had been in this work in Florida during CPS days and was acquainted with this work. So we learned from him.

Our transportation in Itacurubi was by horseback or horse and wagon. The first days of February, 1947, we started the hookworm work in the colony of Friesland. For the most part, it was my work to contact ten to fifteen families a day, giving out forty to sixty small metal containers for the stool specimens and explaining to the people what the program was and how it worked.

The next morning the containers were gathered up and the analysis made in the afternoon. The following day medications were given out to those needing them and they themselves saw to taking them. This meant making one to three calls at each home. It was a good opportunity to learn to know many of the people which otherwise I would not have had. We found out the infestation was rather high. I helped with this until the middle of May, 1947, approximately 7 months.

The Cornelius Kroker family built a nice room on their yard as our living quarters. The walls were made of adobes with a grass roof, screens on the windows and door

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and a nice smooth hard floor. They also fixed three meals a day for us and washed our clothes. It was a comfortable setup for us three MCC workers. As a whole, the colony people treated us well. For the most part we attended the Sunday services in the village in which we lived. Usually they didn't have Sunday evening services.

The MCC felt there needed to be more spiritual activity for the youth. So we three MCC workers were asked to start some kind of a Bible study program on a weekly basis for the youth. We agreed to arrange a regular Sunday evening activity. This needed to be in the high German language. Since none of us had the High German language that well, we wrote it out in English. There was one young colony man who knew the English well enough that he could write it out for us in German. So we made out with our lessons with the colony youth. This was for the youth of the village where we lived, but was not closed to youth from other villages. The one who was responsible to prepare a lesson also would lead the meeting. Singing played a large part in the life of the colony people and as a whole they did sing well.

The main occupation of the colony people was farming. To prepare the ground for planting they had small horse-drawn equipment. Most of the rest was hand labor, so children and women spent much time in the fields. As a general rule, the women also did the milking. From what I observed the women helped a lot with the field work, but they got very little help from the men with the house work. After the evening meal was over the men sat down to relax while the women had the dishes and cleanup to do. They put in more work hours than the men, and by the age of 40 they showed their age more than the men.

In this part of Paraguay the lower lying land was not good for farming, but was used as grassland for cattle. The monte (higher land) was good farm land, but was covered with bush and much timber. The timber was very hard wood and very difficult to clear. This was done by the men with help from the Paraguayan men.

There was much natural beauty. With all the rain, the vegetation was lush with many beautiful flowers. Even the big timber would blossom with many bright and contrasting colors. The birds were like the flowers with bright, contrasting colors, but they were not good songsters.

The growing crops were green and beautiful. These crops included corn, cotton, peanuts, and kaffir corn (a feed crop growing up to seven feet tall with nice white grain heads). The stalk of the kaffir corn was good for livestock feed, and the grain used for livestock and chickens.

They had gardens, hot climate fruit trees, and a root crop called mandioca, that took the place of our potatoes. This was planted at different times during the year and was dug as they needed it. Besides using it as we would a potato, they also used it in a number of other ways. They also had a bush that grew around three feet tall and had rose colored flowers whose petals they picked and cooked and used much like we do gelatin, although it didn't jell. It had a good flavor and also made a good tasting drink.

During the time I was at Friesland the political situation became increasingly worse. The government began drafting young men. Army officers came to the villages and just

rounded up the young men and marched them to induction centers, which might take a number of days. No provisions were made to feed the young men meanwhile. So what did the young men do? They stole. If they met someone with food, they took it. If they came to a store, they helped themselves. I suppose the officers didn't do anything since the boys needed to eat.

Generally speaking, stealing was bad in Paraguay. As the situation got more serious, the army began to ask for men with wagons and teams to haul troops and supplies for them. If they didn't want to, the army said they would just take the wagons and teams and do it themselves. The colony felt that would be the last they would see of the wagons and teams, so they gave in to do it. They would be gone anywhere from a few days to three weeks. It was a bad situation.

During the time I was at Friesland there were two events that took place that I had never witnessed before. I don't think I will ever forget them as long as my mind serves me. One evening coming home from our work in Itacurubi we saw what looked like a low thin cloud coming from the south. It turned out to be locusts. They were around four inches long and were coming down to settle for the night to feed and lay eggs. As they came they hit the horses on the forehead and face. The horses didn't like that. They turned their heads completely to the side. The colonists knew what this meant and it was very discouraging to them. ▲

To be continued

To Brazil by Van

by Rufus Schrock

Through Guatemala and Into Costa Rica

[We continue with the story of how the Schrock family drove to Brazil in a van.]

Passing through customs is the time we deal the most with the people of the country and add to our patience. Other times are when we stop to eat, but then there are less people.

We came to the Mexico/Guatemala border, the children entertained themselves with the curious lookers-on—while the people outside entertained themselves with such a strange vehicle and the strange people inside. The smaller ones think that this surely is a good place to find money. We learned quickly that just because you are coming with a vehicle doesn't mean that the people will move out of your way.

After the customs ordeal we soon are traveling along a river in a deep canyon between the mountains. It is very beautiful and awesome. As we travel it seems as though the water in the river is running uphill.

One of the girls wrote in her diary:

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“You can’t see the sky unless you really crane your neck. When we look down the people appear to be ants.

“Guatemala seems to be Toyota country, like Mexico was [VW] bug country.

“For us it seems strange to see corn planted on the side of a steep mountain.

Obviously these people don’t get our type of rainfall, but yet they do get rain because at places the mountain slides down on the road, so that they have to make a road around the slide. At times it is better on the other side of the river, so we cross over and travel along the other mountain.

“When you are down you can go up, and when you are up you can go down, and it is our turn to go up this time, so we are about to hit the clouds. It’s very foggy and cool. It’s almost 5:00 p.m. Boy! You’ve just got to believe me. It’s foggy—you can’t even see. Actually we’re in the clouds. Now we’re out, but it was neat. Do you want to know the simple truth? I don’t regret this one bit so far, and we’ve been on the road for a week. Boy, this is worth it!”

Oops! Swerve—a quick breath and then relief and thankfulness. We passed a wobbly man walking on the road. As we passed him, we also met an oncoming car, leaving only sparse room for the condition. Whew! That woke me up.

At 6 o’clock in the evening we stopped for a little snack. Two hours later we reach the city of Guatemala. Not wanting to crowd the missionary down with a huge crowd, we found a McDonald’s before we headed for the country. We were a little out of place here at this Big M without a tie or coat, but we were glad to be somewhere where things looked familiar. Especially little Kevin thought it was great.

When we got to Quastatoya, we didn’t know exactly where the Isaac’s lived, so we were just driving through town slowly, when we saw this Mennonite girl on a bike. I opened my door and asked her if she would know where Brad lived. She promptly took us to his house, leading us on her bike.

In Quastatoya we stayed in an empty mission house. Brad and Donna were very hospitable to us. The place we stayed was equipped to wash clothes, so we took this opportunity to wash a week’s worth of clothes.

We had breakfast with Brad’s, then went to church. After 12:00 Brad and I went out to this place where we have a small mission hut. The poorest of the poor live in this area. We sang a little and had a short service and then went back home. In the evening we had service again in Guastatoya. I was privileged to talk to our brethren in Guatemala.

We left Brad’s Monday morning on our way to Honduras and into the unknown. Not long on the road we came to a Y where we should have turned right and south, but we kept on straight and east, so we lost a good bit of time going east on a nice road to the east coast. We came back and still had a time of it trying to find this road. After midday, we stopped and got us some pineapples. They were good.

We crossed into Honduras at about 7 o’clock that evening. They have nice roads here.

We drove for only a short time into Honduras, maybe an hour, when we came

upon this nice looking restaurant. We stopped for supper and asked about traveling in Honduras at night. They advised us against the idea. This place was kind of in the fork of the road where now we should bear to the left to continue south rather than right, which would have taken us through El Salvador. We didn't want to go through El Salvador, because there we would need a visa, which we did not have.

Back to the restaurant people. There was a hotel across the road from the eating place and they told us we could stay, so we did. Seems like maybe it was twelve dollars for the night. Fairly cheap. What a deal! There were three beds, a shower and a ladies room. The sink was out in the main room, but alas the shower didn't work.

As we were unloading the things we needed and planning on a good night, someone saw a big roach and soon the place was clearing out. The older children slept in the van outside, while we and the smaller children slept in sleeping bags on bean bags.

The gates were locked at night to the hotel, so when I got up early in the morning to leave, we could not get out. Sometime before 5 o'clock in the morning, the cry went out, "Gates unlocked," so we were leaving at 5:10. We only took time for tooth brushing and away we went. After two hours of driving, we were still impressed with the roads. They were nice, wide and smooth roads.

At 8:45 we came through this prosperous little town and got us a real good breakfast. I walked over a good bit of this little city looking for a money changer. Finally off to the side I found this business that could help me out. She had some kind of fabric shop.

Quote from a diary:

"You know, I checked five books from the library, but I just don't read well. I've read one. Things are just too interesting outside to read."

Fueled up around 11:00 a.m. Later we stopped again at a fruit stand and bought some bananas. Everyone went bananas over bananas. We had about a dozen a piece.

We arrived at the Honduras/Nicaragua border after 6 o'clock, so we passed into Nicaragua, but were stuck at the border because they were closed until 8 o'clock in the morning. So we were in for a hot, dusty night with sleeping bags.

There is this little straw roof shack down across the bushes where they say we can find something to eat.

While Mark and I ate, the rest kept watch on the van. Milcah thought she might find comfort inside the van, but Flora made her leave so she could clean it up. The bugs outside are a pure pest. Eva lays on the sidewalk. The girls talk about a bug in the food and a worm on Flora's leg and . . . oh, my!

In the morning we had a little something to eat and some sodas. Fernando and Mom handed out tracts.

The officials got here on time and we were soon on our way. The morning was cooler, but still dusty.

Wow! These are some pot holes in the roads. I wonder how it would be if it was worse. We followed a semi for a ways. He seemed to be familiar with the road and the holes too. We stopped for gas at an intersection and changed roads toward the west and were really on a fairly nice road. We were driving at a good clip when I saw a bundle

rolling down the road after us. We stopped and picked it up. It was one of our sleeping bags. We must have left our carrier undone on top when we were done at the border.

Going through the normal procedures of traveling in Central America, we approach this police station and a cop stops us, which is normal too. But this guy says I was speeding. I doubt if I was and told him that the roads weren't fit to speed on because they were too rough. He had my license and kept on telling me where I should go to pay my fine. I wasn't sure what I really should do, but he finally gave back my license and we left.

We stopped for dinner at about 12:30. A nice looking place, open house or roof with straw top. Looked like a good place to have a picnic, so we ordered our food and started eating. Fairly good food. Some like it, some don't. The wind starts to blow and it just gets real windy with dust and sand blowing through the air and into our plates. This was followed by a good shower. We loaded our wet suitcases back on the van and headed for Costa Rica. At 4:20 we were out of Nicaragua and getting our papers for Costa Rica. Here we met our surfer friends again, whom we had met earlier at the Guatemala border. They were traveling in a step van or bread truck.

Costa Rica is such a friendly country. And oh, how beautiful! The people were nice and the food was good. We had no problem. We ordered about twice the amount of food we should have.

We found a hotel for the night in this little town. Like the one in Mexico, it had the name El Correl. I don't think there are any connections. It was an exceptionally nice place. We had a good bath, a good bed and a great night.

The next day up in the mountains the roads aren't quite so good. There are washouts where they put big rocks in the road to stop the wash and fill the holes. You just kind of go across, because you need to get to the other side.

Finally, way up high in the mountains we come to a complete halt. As we wait, we start getting acquainted with other people who also are waiting. The line keeps getting longer and longer. We get to visit with this guy who does a good bit of traveling all about. We even found out he speaks English, so we visit on and he tells us that we are now at an elevation of 8,000 feet and yet have to climb 4,000 more before we start descending for 25 miles, to reach an elevation of 2,000 feet. In this low altitude we shall enter into Panama. We have yet an interesting night to spend in Costa Rica. ▲

To be continued

Life in Brazil

My Air Force Doctor

My arm had been giving me fits, but I figured that with a little time it would get better. Well I figured wrong. One sunshiny morning it was aching so bad I couldn't get out of bed. So after my wife had helped me up and into my clothes, I decided to pay my orthopedist a visit.

He's a friendly chap who doesn't waste time on niceties. After making a generous contribution to his financial welfare, I was ushered into his office.

"What's your problem?"

"It's my arm, doctor."

"Take your shirt off."

My wife takes my shirt off.

"Does it hurt here?" he asks, digging his finger in at exactly the wrong spot. Silly question. He could see by the way I winced that it hurt like crazy.

"You've got bursitis in your shoulder and need an infiltration. But first I want you to get an X-ray."

I did and was soon back in his office. "You've got a little spur here, so I'll have to go in by the back way."

He leaves us and a few minutes later returns with a loaded syringe and a piece of cotton dampened in alcohol. "A divine remedy," he tells me. "Now, as I go in with the needle, you're going to suddenly feel a shooting pain. There... did you feel it?" Of course I felt it. Why else would I have jumped?

He injects the stuff and then tells me that I'm going to have to be coming in for some physical therapy sessions.

Doctors are made of flesh and blood just like anyone else, so I tell him, "I am not coming in for physical therapy."

"And why not?"

"Because I have a job and don't have time to come to town for treatments."

He didn't argue so I concluded that I had won the dispute.

"Don't put your shirt on." He sat down behind his desk and had my wife and me sit down in front. On a hunch I asked him if he had a military background. I hit pay dirt. Proudly he announced that he had spent five years in the Brazilian Air Force.

"As a doctor?" I asked.

"As a doctor," he answered.

That explained everything, and maybe helped prepare me just a bit for what was to come.

He stood up. "Stand up," he ordered.

I stood up, facing him.

Now he began rotating his right arm like the propeller on an airplane. That was OK with me—until he ordered, "Now you do it."

I don't know how the guy ever got into the Air Force, but it's not hard to figure out how he got out. Anybody knows that if you have a twin-engine plane and one motor is shot, you try to make out with the motor that's working. But not this Air Force doctor. "Come on, do like I do!" With the bad propeller, naturally.

"I can't do it, doc."

"Yes you can."

I got the propeller into an 8 o'clock position. "That's it, doc."

"Keep going."

Nine o'clock. "No more, doc."

"Keep going."

Ten o'clock, but the propeller was shaking like it was about to come off the hinges.

"That's positively all."

"Keep going."

Eleven o'clock and then a weak twelve o'clock. I felt like a hero as the propeller sagged to the six o'clock position.

"I knew you could do it. It doesn't hurt as bad anymore, does it?"

It was hurting like crazy. And I hadn't seen anything yet. He now began spinning his propeller and like a sadistic drill sergeant gave another order: "Now do it 50 times."

Weakly: "Fifty times?"

Loudly: "Fifty times."

One... two... three... five...

Looking at my wife, he gave another order, "You do the counting." He knew that the spirit was willing, but that the propeller was weak. Now my wife counted: Four... five... six...

Knowing that she wouldn't pull any fast ones, he left his office to take care of some other business.

I think it was hurting my wife about as much as it was hurting me. I hit 30, then 40, then 45... 46... 47... 48... 49... 50 and then I gave the propeller one extra twist for good measure... 51.

He came in all businesslike, or rather, military doctorlike. "Fifty-one," I told him proudly. If I hoped to make any points with that one extra revolution, it didn't work.

"Now let me see, were you going clockwise or counterclockwise?"

I couldn't care less and Faith wasn't sure, so my good Air Force doctor arbitrarily decided which way it had been and ordered: "Now, give me 50 more turns in the opposite direction."

This was sadism at its purest. But he had put me through boot camp and I knew that orders are meant to be obeyed. So now I was flying my aircraft backwards. This time, however, I was doing my own counting. 22... 23... 24... 35... He looked up and smiled indulgently at me. No sweat. 41... 42... 47... "OK, OK, you can quit."

Just a word to any of you good readers who might have a military doctor. Don't underestimate them. They have been trained to win wars. So when they smile, it's not because they think you are amusing, but because of what they have cooked up for you to do next.

Now the B.A.F. doctor got up, went to the wall near the door, and using his forefinger and middle finger, walked his hand up the wall and then back down. He did it several times, making sure I was watching, and then ordered: "Now you do it. Twenty times."

Here I was reduced from a twin-engine plane to a common housefly walking up and down the wall on two legs... uh, fingers. I quickly found out that "walking" up wasn't all that bad and then, if I would just slide down, it was bearable torture. For some

reason the B.A.F. doctor chose to ignore my downslidings. So finally I had a victory of sorts.

But my real victory came a week later when I had to come back for a check-up.

“Take off your shirt.”

I took it off with no help.

He poked me where it was supposed to hurt. “Does it hurt?”

“Nope.”

“Here?”

“Nope.”

“Lift your arm up. Does it hurt.”

“Nope.”

“Huh! I thought you would have to have physical therapy, but I guess you won’t have to after all...”

If sometime you are seated in the waiting room of the Santa Terezinha Hospital and I come in with my arm held stiffly down in a six o’clock position, and you hear the following dialog, don’t be surprised:

Receptionist (smiling): Hi. May I help you?

Me: Yes, is there an orthopedist on duty?

Receptionist (Still smiling): Yes, Dr. Walcio is on duty. Would you like to see him?

Me: Uh, is he the only one in the house?

Receptionist: Yes.

Me: Well, thanks a lot. I guess I’ll mosey along. Just checking. (I begin walking out)

Receptionist (a worried look on her face): Becker, are you OK? Are you sure you don’t need to see a doctor?

Me: Well, actually, I do need to see a doctor... I was just wondering... would there be a pediatrician on duty? Preferably a lady doctor who refused to retire when she hit 75...? ▲

This & That

May 1 is Labor Day in Brazil, and of course, a national holiday. It is also the day that was chosen to have a special meeting at the Rio Verdinho Congregation on some of the concerns lifted out at the last Annual Meeting. The members from all the congregations and mission posts were invited. Needless to say, not everyone came, but even so we had a good turnout. The first talk by Min. Mark Loewen was on child nurture. Next Min. Richard Minerger spoke on weddings. A number of items were discussed and some decisions made.

The first Sunday evening of each month the Rio Verdinho and Monte Alegre congregations have services together. On May 3, it was Rio Verdinho’s turn to come to Monte Alegre, so there was a big crowd present for the baptism of eight young people. The Sunday evening before they called off services so they could be here and listen to the experiences.

Brazil ¹⁵ News

On May 4 Weldon, Stanley & Mary Schultz's son, left for the voluntary service unit in Quebec, where he plans to spend six months.

On the evening of May 7 the Monte Alegre School had its end of the year program. The following day was play day. There are games all day long and a big churrasco at noon. The big attraction this year was a greased pole that children from 6 to 26 tried to climb. Lincoln Becker, age 9, got the first prize of three reais. Bradley Kramer got the second prize of five reais and Norman Souto won the "top" prize of 30 reais.

On March 21 of last year, Joana Messas Woitas, 69, from Londrina, in the southern state of Paraná underwent heart surgery. Shortly afterward she suffered a heart attack and was taken back into surgery. The damage was so extensive that the surgeon, Dr. Francisco Gregori Jr., was unable to get the sutures to hold in the necrotized tissue. Time was running out. In desperation, Dr. Gregori had someone run out to a nearby service station and buy a tube of Super Bonder glue. He glued a patch over the area, waited 10 minutes, and restored circulation to the heart. It worked. The doctor attributes it to luck. Recently asked how she was, Joana replied, "Estou muito bem. Estou viva, né?" ("I'm very well. I'm alive, am I not?")

For those of you who know the area here, the road called "Broadway," that turns off of the main road shortly before the Monte Alegre church and goes down past our place and to where Emma Burns and the Kramers and others live, has been graded up. The next step is to gravel it. The municipal road office has agreed to help with this part of the project. To say the least, the road was needing it very badly.

Stuart Mininger, Lee Koepl and Wayland Loewen were here for short visits, either to keep up their permanent visas or for business.

On May 11 Dave & Martha Kramer from the Boa Esperança Congregation in Mato Grosso had a little girl, Larissa. A beautiful name.

Mark & Glenda Loewen and family made a quick trip to Curitiba to visit the Roberto Amorim family and to the Witmarsum Mennonite Colony. Mark was especially impressed by a man who had gotten a copy of Keeping the Faith in Portuguese. His testimony was that he had gone to the army because his parents had never told him it was wrong. Apparently the Mennonite church no longer teaches this either. It appears there still are seeking souls among those Mennonites. The fields are ripe, but . . . the same old story.

On May 14 Melvyn, João & Charlene Souto's son, left for the North Forks voluntary service unit to put in some time. The time being spent on these projects is being very good for our young men here.

The Rio Verdinho School had their program on May 20 and their play day the following day.

Daniel & Anna Kramer, Paul & Rachel Yoder, Myron & Martha Kramer, and James Yoder traveled to the US to be present at the Jona Dyck/Rosella Yoder wedding. We're expecting a visit from the bride and groom.

Earl & Johanna Schmidt had sale on May 23. Stacy & Jeanette had sale on May 30. They are returning to the US. Staven & Adeline Schmidt are returning for an indefinite period of time.

Brazil News

On Thursday, May 28, we had our Thanksgiving services and carry-in dinner here on the Colony, exactly six months after the N American holiday. We do this because the November date puts us right in the middle of our planting season.

Calvin & Donna Hibner and family have transferred their membership to the Rio Verdinho Congregation.

How many of you folks would be interested in taking a tour on the Amazon River? It would be very interesting—and expensive. If there is enough interest, I will check prices. If you would like to tour the Amazon, call or write Pat & Sylvia Baize at P.O. Box 42, Iroquois, SD 57353 (Phone: 605 546 0244).

Paulo David is becoming an auctioneer. He helps auction off the household items. But he has a problem. His wife likes to bid. It would be anti-democratic to not take her bids, so when he feels she is bidding on something they don't need, he tells the crowd, "Como on, give me another bid or my wife will buy this item." His tactic works, except that his wife bids again, and he ends up paying an even higher price. Once in desperation, he said, "Please someone, get this woman out of here!" But don't get the idea that Paulo & Mel don't get along. They do. Famously. That's just Paulo for you.