

Brazil News



No. 99
August 1999

Editorial

The Fishermen

The tragedy, the utter finality, the unfathomable suffering of a soul cast into eternal punishment boggles our imagination. Were it not for the gravitational tug we feel from the depths of this place and the certainty that without a special work of grace and mercy in our lives this is where our own soul will spend eternity, we would prefer to ignore its existence.

Our concept of hell is often limited to fire and brimstone. When we see an especially hot fire with flames roaring upward, we think of hell. We try and imagine what it would be like to spend eternity in such a conflagration. We fail to realize, however, that even without flames, hell would still be a most terrible place.

For the benefit of anyone who might believe that the torture of hell is dependant upon flames, we present an imaginary situation involving six fishermen. We will pay special attention to Jed.

Jed was raised in a religious community. His parents weren't especially religious and didn't often make it to church. They said that God is everywhere so He can be worshipped anyplace. Consequently Sundays were often dedicated to outings, or to be more exact, to trout fishing.

To Jed fishing was more than a sport. It was a passion. His entire life revolved around fishing. He worked hard all week so that he could spend weekends at his favorite trout streams. The young lady he married thought it would be interesting to be the wife of a renowned fisherman. That is, until she found out that for Jed going fishing was more important than being married. She began to nag him every time he mentioned going fishing. This was really quite convenient, for now he could say he was going fishing to get away from his wife's nagging.

Jed never went fishing alone. Over the years he accumulated a fine bunch of

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buddies...fine from the standpoint that they all had the same philosophy of life. If they would have gotten along with their wives half as well as they got along with one another, they would have all been model husbands. They always enjoyed each other's company, they always had something interesting to talk about. And they never got tired of fishing.

Jed and his buddies grew old and one by one they took leave of this life. Jed outlived them, but one day his time came too. The next thing he knew he was being whisked through space. Suddenly he found himself in a spacious hall facing a tall bar. There he was asked to give account of his life.

Jed immediately sensed that the outcome of his trial wouldn't be good. The excuses he had used all his life for not going to church, for not being a considerate husband, for not being a sincere Christian, all tumbled out of his mouth like lead sinkers. His very words seemed to be dragging him downward, downward...

Feeling the flames lapping at his feet, Jed cried out in desperation, "I don't want this! Don't you have something better for me?"

A voice like many thunders asked, "How would you like to spend eternity?"

Jed didn't have to think twice. "I would like to spend eternity fishing with my buddies."

"Your request is granted," the voice of thunder answered. "You may choose your buddies and the stream in which you wish to fish."

Jed couldn't believe his ears. He began to blubber a thank you, but the voice interrupted, "Choose your buddies."

This was easy. He chose his five best buddies.

"Choose your trout stream."

Jed chose a place he had read about. Everyone said it was the best place in the world to catch trout.

The voice continued, "Listen carefully! Where you are going there will be no night. You will neither get hungry nor physically tired. There is but one rule you must follow: Never stop fishing. Never, never. If ever you stop fishing, you will hear a clap of thunder. You must immediately resume your fishing. In case you don't, the ground will open up under your feet and you will be plunged into the hottest part of hell. Do you accept this condition?"

"Yes! Yes!" Jed fairly shouted. "Don't you worry, the ground will never open up under my feet..."

Never, during all his life, had Jed or his buddies lived in such pure delight. The fishing tackle they found on the bank of the trout stream was the best they had ever seen. In fact, they had never dreamed that such tackle existed.

Such fish! Even the smallest were trophy size. The surrounding mountains echoed with their delirious shouts as they broke each others record. There was much back pounding.

The stories, the jokes, the six men told as they waded in the crystal clear mountain water, reeling in one trophy trout after another.

It was Jed who came up with the idea. “Fellows, this is unbelievable! Here we are, all condemned to eternal punishment, yet here we are, happier than we ever were during life...”

“That’s right,” one of his buddies interrupted, “and we don’t have to worry about going home to a nagging wife.”

They all roared.

It was Jed who best expressed what they were all thinking, “Fellows, you know, this is better than heaven.”

They all clapped and laughed deliriously.

There was just one little hitch to their happiness. During life when a large trout was caught, it was put on ice and taken home so that everyone could see what great fishermen they were. Here, just in a short time, they had an enormous pile of trout on the bank. Since there was no place to take them, and since they didn’t get hungry, the only thing to do with them was throw them back into the stream. After that, no matter how large the fish, it was soon tossed back.

There is no way of telling time in eternity, so we can’t measure anything in hours or days or years. For Jed and his buddies, about the only reference point that could be used was the amount of fish caught. They might say, “Do you remember what you told me about 700 fish back?”

If time could have been measured, it might have been a month after they arrived, or maybe a year, that a subtle change came over the fishermen. Camp was just a bit quieter than before. Since they weren’t exposed to the world, they didn’t come up with any new jokes. You can only tell an old joke or story so many times before it gets old. So when someone would begin telling a joke, someone would growl, “For the fifty-second time...” Finally it was just a sour, “Oh, shut up!”

No, something wasn’t working right. Even an exceptionally large trout would hardly elicit a comment from anyone—not even from the one who caught it.

One day one of the fishermen said, “Whew! You know this fishing business is hard work!” For the first time in a long time everyone agreed and a conversation was actually begun. Another said, “Fellows, you know...I’m not... I’m not enjoying this quite as much as I thought I would.”

The seriousness of the situation was best expressed by Jed himself, “Fellows, do you know what I would do right now, if I could? I’d go home. I’d walk straight up to my wife and I’d say, ‘Sally, never again am I going fishing. And do you know what we’re doing Sunday? We’re going to church!’”

“I’d do the same thing,” another said.

Many more fish were caught. Thousands –Maybe tens of thousands. Everyone was caught by surprise when Lod suddenly threw his rod down and yelled at the top of his lungs, “I refuse to catch one more fish!”

In the distance a clap of thunder was distinctly heard.

With a look of fright, Lod snatched up his rod and began casting. No one said a word during the next several hundred fish. Finally someone ventured, “That was a close one!”

Everyone nodded in agreement.

Jed called a meeting. “Fellows, this whole thing isn’t turning out like we had planned. Let’s face it, we’re sick and tired of this place. And I can’t quite figure it out. We’re doing exactly what we always wanted to do. You might say we’re on an eternal weekend, but we hate it. Back on earth we thought things were rough because we constantly were supposed to choose things that were good and holy. We didn’t think it was fair to always be denying ourselves, like the preacher said we should. The Bible was full of it too: Don’t do this and don’t do that.

“But fellows, do you see what happened? We could take up our cross and live a holy life and then go to heaven, or we could do what we did and go to hell. We decided that going fishing was more important than serving the Lord. We didn’t go to church, we didn’t take care of our families, we didn’t listen to what some of our good Christian neighbors had to tell us.

“You fellows remember just as well as I do that time that they had tent meetings in our little town. We all went. We all heard the Gospel and we knew exactly what we should do. I remember clearly how I went home and tossed the thing back and forth. I knelt by my bed and prayed. I was just saying yes, when I thought, ‘Is it worth giving up fishing so I can go to church on Sunday?’ I decided that I would keep on fishing, but that occasionally I would go to church on Sunday.

“Now here we are doing exactly what we gave in exchange for our soul. We should love it, shouldn’t we? We decided to give up heaven so we could fish. Now here we are, fishing, fishing, fishing. It’s a way heavier cross than any cross we possibly could have had to carry during life.

“Fellows, on earth we had a choice: Carry a light cross and someday go to heaven. We still have a choice. Carry a heavy cross, an unbearable cross, or have the earth open up and dump us straight into hell...

“When we were placed in this place, we thought we were in paradise. Well we’re not. We don’t have a solitary thing to look forward to. At the very best things are going to be rotten. At the worst...

“We’re six of us. We could choose one of us to be a preacher. But what would he preach? About all he could say would be, ‘Fellows, keep on suffering. If you give up, you’re in hell.’

“You all remember that story of the rich man who wanted someone to go back to earth and warn his brothers. You would think that someone from hell, someone like us, would make a real preacher. But do you know something? We wouldn’t! We wouldn’t be able to tell how we accepted Jesus as our Savior and had our sins forgiven. The only lessons we would be able to teach would be the ones learned from Satan in hell.

“Fellows, we heard preachers tell of how they were saved and how that we could be saved, but we didn’t believe them.”

This impressive sermon had but a limited effect on the listeners. It was a sermon without hope.

Many fish were caught and tossed back in the stream. It was Lan who threw down

his rod in despair. A distant rumble was heard, but Lan didn't move. He didn't care. The earth opened up and enormous flames leaped out and drew him in.

The five remaining fishermen looked steadily at the water and kept on pulling in more fish.

Next was Lod. That left four.

Not too many fish were caught before Lacy was swallowed up by the flames. That left three.

Next was Ruddy. That left two. Jed and Sol. Once again Jed spoke.

"Sol, do you know why our four buddies have gone down the hole? Do you know why we will soon follow them? It's because our sins are too terrible to be in a beautiful place like this. We're not here for going fishing on Sunday. We're here because we said no to the Lord Jesus. There is only one punishment worthy of such a sin: eternal flames. Our very conscience is dragging us into the pit of hell."

Next was Sol. That left only Jed.

Once more the earth opened up and then all was silence.

Down deep, many today believe that a loving God wouldn't cast a soul into hell forever. There are those who say He doesn't even exist. It is believed that with a watered down God, or no God, there will be no eternal destruction. Scientific promises of longevity and of an auto-cleansing society would turn this earth into a paradise.

What these men and women ignore is that once the door of heaven is barred, this earth would soon be hell. Like the six fishermen, their guilty conscience would drag them into the depth of the pit, until not one soul would remain.

One more word on Jed. He assumed he had been in eternity for many, many years. After his buddies all left him and he was alone, he found his watch in the bottom of his tackle box. He stood motionless staring at the hands. The watch was running, but the hands were exactly where they had been when he entered eternity. ▲

Our Trip

Following are some of my impressions of N America:

Campers

The amount of campers seen on the roads in N America is truly astounding. One day just for curiosity Faith and I stopped at the place going into McPherson where campers are sold and asked the fellow in charge if we could look around. He said we could. Once again I was astounded by the absolute luxury of some of the models. I am told they may run over 50 thousand dollars. But let's just say that an average camper costs 25 thousand dollars. That still makes for a lot of money being towed around on the highways, not to mention the motor homes that doubtlessly can devastate all but a very healthy bank balance.

Even so, one can't help but feel just a twinge of envy when seeing a beautiful camper with two or three slide-outs (slid-in while traveling, of course) majestically cruising down the highway.

My observation is that it's middle class people who own these homes. In developing nations anyone owning one of these campers would be in the millionaire class. Needless to say, since it would be imported, it would cost a lot more. The fact remains, however, that in America the middle class can have what only the very rich can have in developing nations. ▲

Harley Davidsons

Brazil is full of cycles. In probably at least 90 percent of the cases they are used as an alternative mode of transportation. In other words, they are used because there isn't money to buy a car.

I couldn't get over the amount of mammoth cycles on the roads in the US. It appears to be a cultural thing. I am told that some otherwise very normal people drive these behemoths.

I have written about the *mototáxi*—motorcycle taxis that haul one passenger—that have sprung up all over Brazil in the last several years. I understand that our local town of Rio Verde now has approximately 600 of these one passenger taxis.

Different ones on the Colony have cycles. Today they are used mainly for running errands or checking the fields. It used to be that different ones would come to church and youth meetings on cycles. Today that seems to be a thing of the past. ▲

Eccentrics

I'm amazed at the assortment of different looking people—especially men—to be found in N America: males with long, unkempt hair, pony tails, idiotic hairdos, straggly beards, you name it.

It's easy to write this kind of people off, but wait! This unconventional behavior is a façade, it's a frantic attempt to try something that can fill the deep emptiness of the soul. These uncouth looking humans aren't animals. In my brief encounters with them I have found them to be very courteous.

When in Keystone, SD, in the Black Hills, we visited a shop where there were some glass blowers at work. Especially one of them looked like he was living in a little world of his own, a world that would have little in common with ours.

It was a pleasant surprise when a customer came in and asked to see a specific type of vase. The man burst out of his shell and in a spontaneous demonstration of warmth, did his best to find exactly what the lady wanted—which meant digging out a box of glassware and unpacking his goods.

At times I think we are too timid. These people who are bold to be different, why wouldn't they also be bold to accept the true Faith, so different from what the world has to offer? ▲

John Holdeman's Bible

During our stay in S Dakota, Raymond & Joan Ensz invited us over for supper. While visiting that evening, Raymond showed us a copy of John Holdeman's Latin/Greek New Testament, published in 1860. He asked me if I knew of anyone who would know Latin or Greek and could make use of the New Testament. I told him that Paulo David would probably come as close as anyone to understanding these languages. He said, "Take this Bible to Paulo David and if I ever get to Brazil, I may pick it up again."

Paulo David, a history teacher, probably knows more about John Holdeman than a lot of Americans. He was influential in getting the translation of *The Mirror of Truth* into Portuguese underway and has been an active proofreader. (At this point Myron Kramer is approximately half done). He devours each new article as it is finished.

Knowing what a treasure this book is, with Holdeman's signature on the first page, we carefully wrapped it in cardboard and put it in our carry-on baggage to make sure it wouldn't get lost.

When we got home I called Paulo and told him I had brought him something from the US and that he would never be able to guess what it was. "In fact," I told him, "if I gave you a million guesses, you wouldn't even come close. Once you have it, if someone would offer you a thousand dollars, or five thousand dollars, you wouldn't sell it."

The Bible says we're supposed to be like little children and when it comes to curiosity, Paulo certainly does measure up. He said he didn't know if he would be able to sleep until we went to town and could deliver the surprise.

Now Paulo tells the story in a letter he wrote to Raymond.

Rio Verde — July 24, 1999

Dear bro. Raymond,

Christian Greetings.

Words fail me to express the gratitude I felt when I first held in my hands the historical treasure that once belonged to brother John Holdeman. To merely say I am thankful wouldn't even come close to conveying what I really feel.

*Ever since I learned to know the Church of God and became a member, I have through conversations with older brethren and through study tried to acquaint myself with our forefathers. Among them I have had a special interest in the life and works of John Holdeman. We now have part of his work, *The Mirror of Truth*, translated to Portuguese. As I study his writings I am able to feel at least a little bit of the spirit and doctrine of this brother who in the past had such an important role in the building of the church.*

All those who know me are aware of how I always quote and share with the brotherhood the teachings of our brother John Holdeman. Now I have the privilege of holding in my hands the same New Testament in Greek and Latin that doubtlessly was a great aid to our brother in his study of the Word of God.

I am especially interested in the Latin version of the Bible since Portuguese is a Romance language, that is, it comes from Latin.

When brother Charles called and told me that a preacher from the US had sent me something and that for me it was so valuable that I would be unable to calculate its value, I told my wife after we hung up, "The only thing it can be is John Holdeman's Bible!" Imagine my surprise when Charles handed me a package that was exactly that.

What else can I say?

How can I thank someone who has never met me and knows very little about me, and even so entrusted me with this treasure? It was God who inspired him to do this.

I will take the best care possible of this New Testament and will use it in my study of God's Word, as John Holdeman must have many times done.

I want to always remain faithful to my Lord, be filled with inspiration and dedicated to His service.

May God bless you, my brother. May He bless your life, your family and your ministry.

I conclude this letter by quoting a verse from the New Testament that I am holding in my hands.

Gratia Domini Nostri Jesu Christ cum Spiritu Vestro Amen.

—Philemonem 25

Paulo David



Thirty Years in Brazil

What Has Been Accomplished?

Legend has it that John Holdeman had a dream or a vision in which he saw the church established in South America at a place called Rosário. I did a quick check on my zip code program for Brazil and came up with seven Rosários. Since Rosário is a traditional Catholic name, it's very possible there are 40 or 50 towns by this name in South America.

This plurality of towns with identical names, found in different countries spread over an immense continent, should in no way detract from any prophetic value that might be attributed to bro. Holdeman's dream or vision. The fact is that the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite is established in South America.

Let's notice what the American Heritage Dictionary has to say about the word *establish*: "To introduce and cause to grow or multiply...to put on a firm basis."

The church *has* been introduced into the South American continent and has grown and multiplied. We sincerely believe it is on a firm basis. Today all of our staff members, except one, have been ordained in Brazil. Of the six missionary couples in Brazil right now, three are from N America and three from here (of these one is a Brazilian couple). The General Mission Board has turned the day-to-day maintenance of these six mission fields over to the Brazil Mission Board.

It has been said that the church in N America expects the church in Brazil to play a

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strategic role in the evangelization of other S American countries. That is a mighty big order. Even if we assume that there will be financial assistance and that some of the personnel will come from N America, just the overseeing of this project (if it comes to this) will be a demanding task. At present we aren't up to it. But if the Lord continues to bless, as He has blessed in the past, we can at least do like the little engine, and say, "We'll try...we'll try...we'll try..."

Now backing up a bit to less lofty objectives, what is the material future of the church in Brazil? Is the government stable? Or will we wake up some morning to find out it has collapsed and that what we own isn't worth anything?

Here the old rule to never say never surely applies. Yes, it's possible that we will wake up some morning engulfed in a terrible financial crisis. Just remember one thing: If that should happen, Brazil will be just one of many dominoes that have all toppled. Should this happen, it will be a time of tribulation, not only in Brazil or in South America, but in all the world.

Barring some catastrophic situation, we can safely assume that Brazil will rapidly progress and begin easing its way into the club of industrialized nations. Take this as a prophecy, or take it as big talk—take it however you like, but if Brazil can get corruption on all levels under control, it will in a short time occupy a prominent position in world affairs. Remember that. Especially you farmers.

For the church in Brazil to meet the challenge of the 21st Century, a somewhat more than subtle change will take place. The American culture will either fade out or fly out (aboard a Boeing 747) as Brazilian membership and leadership increase proportionally. This will create neither a degenerated nor a superior race, but rather will equip us to deal with Brazilian reality. This will not mean abandoning the English language, but it will, of necessity, relegate it to the back seat as a second language. To not speak Portuguese with ease will be seen as a handicap, as having a leg missing, and not as a divine privilege.

As time goes on, visits to N America will not be to see relatives as much as to maintain contact with the church there. Increasingly Brazilian brethren will be in on these trips. (In fact, a tour to N America composed principally of Brazilian members is in the talking and dreaming stage right now.)

The future church in Brazil will be different culturally from the church in N America. Yet there will be incredible similarities. Middle class Brazilians think very much like middle class N Americans. The basic concepts of life between these two cultures are very similar. (It's true that when Brazilians sense a feeling of superiority in foreigners, they become extremely nationalistic, which creates a false impression that culturally they are from the other side of the tracks.)

As we think of evangelizing other Spanish speaking South American countries, unconsciously we imagine Americans taking the lead. This should be rethought. Americans should be present in a supportive role. This should be a project of the Brazilian church. They should provide the main thrust and as much of the manpower as possible.

Why? They have freely received and should now freely give. Their Latin culture gives them a pole position in dealing with their "Spanish cousins." Are they up to the task?

Way down deep something tells me that the doors to other South American countries will open at about the same speed that the gifts of the Brazilian church surface.

This is one of the great challenges we Americans are facing today. We mustn't push down closed doors, but neither can we afford to ignore open doors. We should daily pray to God for wisdom to know how to make the church in Brazil Brazilian. Unless this happens, there will be work that won't be done.

As you read, have you sort of gotten the feeling that we're subtly suggesting that maybe someday the scepter will migrate from N America to S America? If you got even a hint of that, sit down, relax, and have another cup of coffee. So far as I'm aware, there is absolutely no such a feeling here in Brazil, although it could happen, the same as the scepter could someday move to Africa. Personally, I don't expect anything like this to ever happen.

Will there ever be another move to Brazil, similar to the one which took place 30 years ago? Let's open that question up a bit more. Will there ever be a move to some S American country—Bolivia, for example? Without a crisis in N America it isn't likely.

This is lamentable. I am afraid that we as a people are becoming entirely too soft (This includes us here in S America too). We are slaves of the god of routine. This routine doesn't include getting up before daybreak and doing chores. Rather a premium is placed on sleeping in. Lost time must then be made up by going about in a frenzy, with no time for the more important things of life.

This lifestyle has an abortive effect on any thought of moving to a third world country. The thought is: What do I have to gain by moving? Wouldn't it be good to ask ourselves: What would others have to gain if I moved?

Thirty years in Brazil has made me a firm believer in the effectiveness of mission work through colonization. Lessons have been learned here. Some hard lessons. If a new group would move to, say Bolivia, I think we could give some useful pointers. It shouldn't take 30 years to get where we are today. Really, that's beside the point. The point is that another two or three settlements in S America would be a real blessing. I really believe that heaven would have just a few more people in it if that would happen. Not just South Americans, but North Americans too. Ponder that one. ▲

Questions & Answers

Following are some more of the questions asked during our recent time in the US.

Pronunciation

How do you pronounce "Real?"

For the benefit of new readers, the *real* is our currency in Brazil, which substituted the *cruzeiro* at the time of our last monetary reform.

Needless to say, in English real can be pronounced just the way it looks. When

speaking Portuguese, *real* is pronounced *hay-ow*. The tonic accent falls on the last syllable. The plural, *reais*, is pronounced, *hay-ice*, once again with the last syllable being tonic.

Why the H sound instead of a R sound on the first syllable? In most of Brazil the initial R in a word and Rs that come after a consonant are pronounced as an English H. So *rei* (king) is pronounced “hay.” Roberto is *Ho-bear-toe*. Henrique (Henry) is *En-He-key*.

Oh, how complicated! Is that what you’re thinking? Well, you’re one hundred percent wrong. Portuguese is way, way, way easier to pronounce than English. Learn a few basic rules and you can pronounce 99 percent of the words. I’ve been speaking English for over half a century and still commit some verbal atrocities. I constantly consult my dictionary to see how to pronounce words. If you never have to consult a dictionary, you’re either mighty smart or mighty... (I won’t say it).

The day they come out with a *Pronunciation Guide for Dummies* book, I plan on buying one.

The Amazon

Have you seen the Amazon River?

Only from the air. I’m wondering if the people on the next BN tour group would like to go through Manaus and spend a day or two on the Amazon River. I think it would be worth the extra money it would cost. On the way out the Iguazu Falls could be visited.

Haircuts

I understand your haircuts are cheaper in Brazil.

I’ve done a little bit of figuring. A farmer who rents farm ground usually pays one third of the crop as rent. Roughly another third is expenses, so that leaves one third for the farmer. Let’s say he harvests 60 bushels an acre, he ends up getting 20 bushels to spend. And let’s say grain is four dollars a bushel. That means he clears something like 80 dollars an acre on the land farmed.

A good farmer seldom has a shaggy head of hair. Farmers, bless their hearts, are still quite a respectable lot of men. And so they go to the barber about once a month. Twelve times a year.

Please tighten your seatbelts. Twelve yearly pilgrimages to the barber, at 10 bucks a job, comes to 120 US dollars a year. That means that a decent farmer has to farm one and one half acres of wheat per year just to pay his local barber.

It also means that a local barber who cuts ten heads a day, 300 days out of the year, is bagging 3,000 trophies annually. Three thousand times \$10 comes to \$30,000 per annum. A Kansas farmer has to farm 1,500 acres to come up with that much profit.

That's only part of the story. There are years when a farmer gets hailed out and ends up going into the hole. Not a barber, nossiree. The people he farms are good solid citizens who will spend their last dollar to keep from looking like a hippie. So let it snow, let it rain, let it hail, let it be dry as a bone, the barber's grain keeps pouring into the bin.

Folks, that's capitalism at its finest. You would think that farmers all over would sell out and become barbers. Nooooo way. Those old farmers accustomed to solving their problems with a sledge hammer and a cutting torch would collect law suits faster than a dog collects fleas if they turned into barbers. And so, farmers keep on farming, even if they don't know why, and barbers keep on cutting hair, and it's quite obvious why. Yep, that's capitalism.

Anyway, any of you readers planning to come to Brazil on the next BN tour should refrain from going to the barber for six weeks prior to departure. Once you get here we'll rush you to the nearest barber.

The other alternative is buy your wife one of those vacuum sweeper silage choppers and let her have a go at your hair. In just 55 years you will get the profit off of 80 acres of wheat land, although your head may have sort of a hailed-out look to it for two weeks out of each month.

Singing in Church

Do you sing English or Portuguese in church?

Both. We use the *Christian Hymnal* and the *Cantor Cristão*, a Baptist hymnal. If the song leader announces the song in English and then in Portuguese (two hundred and fifty — duzentos e cinqüenta), everyone knows the song is in the *Christian Hymnal*. If, on the other hand, he says: duzentos e cinqüenta — two hundred and fifty, then we know it's in Portuguese. The Rio Verdinho Congregation has two Portuguese hymnals, in addition to the *Christian Hymnal*, so the song leader has to announce which one to use.

We are in the process of compiling our own Portuguese hymnal. The majority of the songs to be used will be taken from other hymnals. Some are being translated. We hope to have something similar to the *Christian Hymnal* when the book is finally in print.

To say the least, this is a mammoth job and won't get done overnight. Work has been going on for several years and probably will for several more. ▲

Complexion

How about the Brazilians, do they all look the same?

Really what the person wanted to ask was: How dark or how light are Brazilians?

This question has an interesting anthropological aspect, something I have observed but have never had the opportunity of researching. Why is it that the darker the race, the hotter the climate in which they live? Sure, there are exceptions, but as a general rule, the darker races live in tropical climates and the lighter races in temperate or cold climates.

I'm sure anthropologists have an explanation for this, but I would prefer to believe this is part of the plan of creation. That's probably sort of beside the point. It is a fact, however, that southern Brazil has a temperate climate which turns subtropical as one travels north, and finally tropical. The states of Goiás and Mato Grosso, where most of us live, are considered subtropical. Those of you who pay attention to the weather information in the Facts & Figures section of this paper will notice that subtropical means a high rainfall, with rare temperature extremes that range between 30°F and 100°F.

The southern tip of Brazil gets frequent light snows during the winter months. The North and Northeast, on the other hand are very hot. That gives you a rough idea of the color distribution of Brazilians.

Significantly, especially Germans, Dutch and Italians who migrated to Brazil settled in the colder climate in the South. Negro slaves who were liberated somehow found their way north to the warmer climate.

The mean color of the Brazilian church members and their children would definitely be darker than the mean color of the members in N America. Some are just as light as any American. But really, that's totally beside the point. I think that the Americans who have adapted to the Brazilian culture don't even notice skin differences. ▲

This & That

Since we spent a couple of months in the US, the information given here will go back all the way to the month of May.

On May 1, Chris & Edna Stoltzfus sold their belongings. They have returned to the US. Duane Miller left for the US on May 1, to spend some time at the VS unit in Albuquerque, NM.

On May 3 Barbra Dirks returned from the Patos Mission in the Northeast, where she taught Dan & Jolene Peaster's children for a term.

Paulo & Valéria Rufino from Patos, Paraíba spent several weeks visiting her parents, relatives and friends in the Rio Verde area.

On May 4, Sidney & Irene Schmidt and children moved back to the US.

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Daniel & Betty Martin spent several weeks in Curitiba, Paraná, to get things organized for the missionaries who will soon be arriving from the US.

We mentioned before that the tract work in Brazil has taken the same course that it did in Mexico. The bulk of the distribution is now being done by the missionaries and members. Quantitatively distribution has plummeted, but qualitatively it has soared. Different tract routes are being maintained by local brethren, as far South, I understand, as the city of Ribeirão Preto, in the state of São Paulo. Young people on the mission fields are actively engaged in distributing tracts. I realize that most tract programs go through a stage in which we must depend on outside help for distribution, but it certainly is a great step ahead when we can take over the bulk of this work.

On May 8, Lester & Sharon Holdeman had sale and shortly after moved back to the US.

On May 9, Marcelo Passos and Juliana Araújo were married in the Rio Verde Congregation. Rather than serve the traditional sandwiches, pickles and tea, they served the *Brasileiríssima* galinhada, pastelão and soda pop. Galinhada, for those unfortunate enough not to know, is an enormous kettle of rice fixed with chicken. A serving of that stuff will open your eyes to what a sandwich isn't. One nice wedding. The Monte Alegre end-of-year school program was on May 12. The following day was the play day and churrasco.

On May 15, Lynette Penner, Eldon & Bonnie's daughter, who had been visiting here for several weeks, returned to the US. Her brother, Harley, left on the same flight and will be spending some time at the Grand Forks, ND unit.

Eugene Koehn, Ileen Koehn's son, spent some time in VS in Grand Forks. He attended his sister Corinne's wedding and plans to return for his other sister's wedding here in Brazil. Ileen went to the wedding in the US.

Arthur, Daniel & Betty Martin's son, is spending some time in VS somewhere in Texas, I think. These VS stints are very good for our young men, both American and Brazilian. It forges an important bond with the church in N America.

Robert Friesen and Wesley Schartner arrived on the Colony by pickup, having driven all the way from Canada. We weren't here at the time, so I am unable to give any details. Hopefully they will write up a trip report and send it this way. I understand they spent a short time here and left by plane—from the Rio Verde airport, a first on international travel. We now have daily passenger service on a regional airline called Pantanal. Needless to say, if they flew out, they left their pickup here.

The Rio Verdinho School had it's program on May 20 and the play day and churrasco the following day.

Most of the Hibners here in Brazil were in the US to attend the Hibner and Litwiller reunions.

All of the Holdeman families were in the US for the Noah Holdeman reunion.

Ministers Mark Loewen and Elias Stoltzfus were to the Patos and Acaraú missions for meetings and communion. In Acaraú several were baptized.

Myron & Sheila Unruh, who had been living in the Fred Dirks house for the last number of years, moved into the Lester Holdeman house.

On May 21 they had a light frost down by the Monte Alegre River where Emma Burns and the Kramers live. It may have frosted other places, but this is all that I'm aware of.

On May 27 the Colony celebrated Thanksgiving, exactly six months after—or before—the North American date. Now that farmers are planting second crops and harvesting in July and August, we could go to the November date and not be all that far off.

Want to make big money in Brazil? Become a well driller. Our rainfall the last several years has been well under normal and wells are drying up left and right. With all the chicken and hog barns coming in, there will be work for a long time. If you can't be a barber, be a well digger.

On May 29 a busload of English teachers and students from Pirenópolis came out to visit the Colony. They spent the night here and the next day attended church services, both morning and evening. There was a carry-in meal at noon.

On June 6, Jesse Loewen and Dean Mininger went to Curitiba to rent a house and get furniture around for the new missionaries, Dean & Vivian Penner and girls, who arrived on the 8th.

On June 9, a minister and a deacon were ordained in the Pirenópolis Congregation, which we mentioned in a previous issue.

The Luiz de Paula family moved back to Pirenópolis, after working for Mark Loewen for several years.

Bill & Gracie Miller bought Dennis & Vera Loewen's farm. When Bills moved into their new house, the shed/house era came to an end on the Colony. We have mentioned before that many families built a large shed with living quarters at one end before building a house. These shed/houses were roomy and very livable. Even so, everyone looked forward to the day in which they would live in a real house.

On June 20, Weldon, son of Stanley & Mary Schultz from the Rio Verdinho Congregation, got married to Julie Ratzlaff from the Lone Tree Congregation. Their wedding service was phoned in to the Rio Verdinho Cong. This wedding was a side benefit of a BN Tour.

On June 22, Jon & Sheila Coblentz had a boy, Randy Allen, who lived for only a matter of hours. The funeral was on the 23rd at the MA Cong.

On June 30 the Dean Penner family from Curitiba came to the Colony, where they listened to his sister Ramona's funeral that was called in from Mississippi.

A girl studying to be a flight attendant spent several days on the Colony to practice her English.

Larry and Verna Peaster and daughter were on the Colony for a few days before going to visit their children, Dan & Jolene, and grandchildren, on the Patos mission.

On July 24, Kevin and Julie Hibner brought John & Sheila Kramer, from the Boa Esperança Congregation in Mato Grosso to spend a few days on the Colony before

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going on to the Acaraú mission, where they will be putting in a term, replacing the William Coblenz family, who are returning to the US.

Becky and Grace Kramer, from Boa Esperança, are on the Colony getting books around that they will be using for teaching in their school this coming term.

On July 25 was the wedding at the Monte Alegre Congregation of Hallis Silva and Marcia, daughter of Mark & Glenda Loewen. Once again it was a wedding with a distinctly Brazilian flavor—literally—with stroganoff and rice being served instead of the traditional...well, you know.

On July 27 some of us from the Colony attended the funeral in Rio Verde of José Vilela, who was killed in an automobile accident. For the benefit of those of you who are acquainted with Colony history, José is the son of Manoel Norberto Vilela, the man we bought the first tract of land from when we moved to Brazil.

On July 28, revivals began in the Rio Verde Congregation, with Harold Koehn, from Montezuma, and Arlo Hibner, from the Monte Alegre Congregation, as the evangelists. These meetings were a real stepping stone in the history of this congregation. Three Brazilian leaders were chosen to assume the leadership of the congregation, thus permitting that Min. Elias Stoltzfus and Dea. John Unruh return to the MA Cong. The three leaders chosen were: José Carvalho, Jerônimo Barros and Paulo David. Every three months one leader will be replaced.