Brazil News

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Editorial

What Is an Education?

We believe in an adequate education. That, we have concluded, can almost always be acquired in eight years of schooling. We hesitate to endorse anything beyond that, feeling that it gets us into the realm of higher education.

The objective of this article is not to criticize nor to undermine that stance. What we want is to understand why we believe this way. There needs to be more conviction than a parrot-like repetition of what the Conference book says.

What is an education? An education, using the word in its Holdeman context, is sufficient formal study to be prepared to face life socially, spiritually and economically.

Socially. There is no virtue in believing the earth is flat. Nor is it a sign of humility to have no idea of what is going on in the world. To have an education doesn't mean we know the answer to every question, but it does mean that we are able to at least listen intelligently when others speak.

Spiritually. Illiteracy is a severe handicap. To barely be able to read and write is deplorable. Stop and think sometime of what it would be like if God's church, world-wide, was made up exclusively of illiterates.

Economically. This is what this article is all about.

Back in the days when the church decided to limit education to eight grades, the majority of the members were farmers. They were able to make a living that fit into the Biblical injunction of being content with food and raiment, or in other words, of having a simple, decent living. To want to step out beyond this and go to high school, and especially college, was seen as high-mindedness.

As time went on, an ever increasing percentage of brethren began to make their living as day laborers. Some started their own business. While these non-farmers didn't have the equity of a farmer, they still could have a very decent living. So for anyone from this group to want to go beyond the eighth grade was still seen as high-mindedness.

Basically, that is the way things stand today.

If you were to give three reasons for our stand against higher education, what would they be?

We're going to suppose these are your answers: 1) Higher education is not conducive to spirituality or a simple trusting faith. 2) The environment in most high schools and colleges is quite corrupt. 3) We are able to have a decent living without taking these risks.

Good.

Now let's suppose that it would become almost impossible to have what we call a decent living without a higher education. Instead of having their own farm or business, instead of having a good paying job, our people would be obligated to survive on a minimum wage doing menial work. No one would have his own farm anymore. Few would own their own house. Not all would be able to own a car, and if they did, it would be an old junker. Because of not having money for traveling expenses, we would have to call revival ministers only from nearby congregations. There, of course, would be no mission program. Summing it up, we would be poor.

Think just a bit before you answer this next question: If by going to high school, or even college we could rise to the standard we maintain today, would we rethink our stand on higher education?

These questions aren't being asked just to get us to do a few mental gymnastics. We are talking about a very real situation in countries other than N America, where the Church is established. Born entrepreneurs will kick the shackles of the low income caste, sometimes with only a third or fourth grade education. But they are an exception to the rule. Here in Brazil, young boys who work on the Colony for a while often pick up the basics of good management and eventually do well on their own.

But for those who can't get an "education" on the Colony and have to face life with only a grade school education, the economic future is often bleak. It's almost impossible to get a good paying job without at least a high school diploma.

What do we tell people in this situation when they tell us they would like to get ahead in life too?

Here are some of our classic answers:

Follow my example and you'll get ahead. Here on the Colony this advice has repeatedly been given with the best of intentions and a willingness to make sacrifices to help the underprivileged brother. More often than not it hasn't worked. In fact, it has resulted in some very serious problems.

The truth of the matter is that a successful farmer has the equivalent of a high school – and possibly college – education. (Please be seated.) That's right. A profession that we grow up with we take for granted. (The same is true of our mother tongue.) Everything looks simple and natural and logical. We forget that a successful farmer is a combination agronomist, economist, mechanic, meteorologist, surveyor, biologist, broker, possibly veterinarian, and you name it. And yet he will normally identify himself as "just a plain old dirt farmer."

But show someone from the city your total operation and he will be just as awed as you are when you see a pilot seated at the controls of a modern airliner. The main difference between a pilot and a farmer is that it's easier to learn to fly than it is to till.

That explains why so many times our attempts to make farmers out of young men from non-farming backgrounds end in frustration.

Don't you know what our Conference book says about higher education? With all due respect to our Conference book, that is a sorry answer. In the first place, the brother probably doesn't even have a Conference book in his language. He may not even know that it exists. Furthermore, he has gotten his grade school education in public school. Very possibly the environment in high school, or even college, isn't all that much worse than where he went to grade school. In fact, it might even be better. So to say that grade eight is OK, but that grade nine isn't, for him, may be a good lesson in Greek.

You don't need an education. There is opportunity everywhere. It may be the absolute truth. But there is a problem. Because of the way we were brought up, we see opportunity. The underprivileged don't. And it doesn't do any good to try and cram an opportunity down their throat. There is a ninety-five percent chance they will throw up.

Get yourself a job. In N America that is good advice. But in most developing nations, that means bare survival. The minimum wage in Brazil right now is approximately US$80 a month. That's discouraging.

You have the picture. Your brother in Christ would like to have a decent living. Because of the way he was brought up, he simply can't understand a lot of your reasoning. But he does believe that with a better education he could eventually migrate from the poor to the middle class – where we are. That's all he wants.

How should we in Brazil deal with this problem? How should missionaries in other lands deal with it? And remember, the solution can't be something that only a missionary can implant. It must be something that our national members can transmit to their children in their home congregations, something that will work for future generations, if time continues. Something that will fit into their culture.

If this article has left you somewhat frustrated, it has accomplished its purpose. That's how your brethren abroad often feel. What kind of advice can you give them? ▲

Life in Brazil

Telephone Lines

The O Popular, our Goiânia paper, used to run ads on easy loans, that is, loans of a thousand dollars or more, without co-signers or any kind of red tape. I knew there had to be some sort of catch to it. And there was. The catch was a telephone line.

When we first moved to Brazil we couldn't understand why there weren't more

telephones around. When we would ask, people would tell us, "The line is very expensive." That made no sense to us. Back in N America all it took was to contact the telephone company and ask for a phone. A day or two later the phone would be installed, for an insignificant fee.

Not here. The "line," which can cost anywhere from twelve hundred to three thousand dollars, is nothing more nor less than the right to use a telephone. When the line is purchased directly from the telephone company, the price can be as low as a thousand dollars. But there is a catch. It can easily take a year or more before the phone is installed.

Why are phones so expensive? First of all, because they are always in short supply. And secondly because a phone line is regarded as a commodity that can be bought, sold, bartered, or rented out. In other words, for some a phone is regarded as an investment.

This brings us back to the instant loans advertised in the Goiânia paper. All it takes is to sign the telephone over to the loan shark. If the high interest loan is paid off on the due date, the paper is returned to the owner and he keeps his phone. And if it isn't, the shark is one phone fatter.

A phone can be rented out for 75 dollars a month. So do a little figuring. Someone who watches his chance can pick up telephones for 15 hundred dollars a piece from people who are in a bind. Ten phones would cost 15 thousand dollars and would bring in 750 dollars a month in rent money. That's a 5% monthly return on the investment, or 60% per annum, plus the fact that the phones can probably be sold for a 50-100% profit by being on the outlook for someone desperate to buy a phone.

This is rapidly changing. Our state owned telephone company will soon lose its monopoly on telecommunications. Knowing this, a real effort is being made to become competitive. The idea is to swamp the market with phones and bring the price down to where there is no longer a black market.

One area where things have definitely improved is in our phone rates. It used to be that a call to N America would cost us three dollars a minute. That comes to five US cents a second. At that rate it could cost you 10 cents just to say, "Well, well, now isn't that something!"

Recently I read in the O Popular that Brazil's international telephone rates were as low, or lower, than those of most industrialized nations. I thought that was baloney, until I got my last phone bill. A call made to the US after ten o'clock costs just a shade over a dollar a minute. "Well, well, now isn't that something!" (Three cents.)

Cellular phones

Just a few words on our new cellular

phone system. It's working beautifully and people are really enjoying this new comfort. Since all of our calls are routed through Goiânia, at times there is a bit of congestion. And it's understandable. In Goiânia it was expected there would be six thousand mobile cellular phones sold, but when the final tally was in, 30 thousand had been sold.

Approximately 800 mobile cellular phones were sold in Rio Verde. The first bill just came in and now there's a bunch for sale. At 22 cents a minute, talk is no longer cheap – especially when you call another mobile cellular unit and get hooked for 44 cents a minute. ▲

Here's a few new numbers to add to your list:

Mark Loewen	621 4604
Bill Miller	613 9101
Daniel Martin, Jr.	613 9045
Wayland Loewen	613 9093
Will Miller	621 3653

A Brazilian Story

by Mário de Moraes

The Stranger

Joaquim Pinto da Silva was probably seven or eight years old when this took place. Some of the details he picked up later on from those who were adults at the time and witnessed what happened. The year was 1926 and the place a little town by the name of Vila Cabral.

There weren't more than 15 houses in this little town. The wealthiest man in town was seu [a term of respect] Nascimento, the boss at a small brewery. The rest were middle class.

Most of the families in Vila Cabral were of Italian descent. One exception was seu Joaquim, who was of Portuguese stock. Life in this little town was an unhurried routine, that is, until one day when a stranger showed up. Riding a horse, he was tall, deeply tanned and sturdily built. By all appearances he was a boiadeiro. [A cowboy who takes part in long distance cattle drives.]

The sudden arrival of this stranger made a real commotion in town. After a quick consultation with some of the neighbors, seu Claudino decided to rent the stranger a room in a little house in his backyard. Different ones were quite upset when they found out about this new arrangement.

"I'm really leery about that fellow," one of the skeptics told Claudino. "I'm suspicious the fellow is a thief."

Another one, even more pessimistic, threw more wood on the fire, "If you ask me, he's a murderer that's on the run."

It's all people could talk about – behind the stranger's back, naturally.

"That Claudino can't be trusted either. Where have you ever heard of such a thing as renting a room to a total stranger? Have you ever noticed that the fellow leaves early and comes in late? He gives me a funny feeling."

All of this created an uneasiness in the little town. It got to the place where the

customarily levelheaded seu Gino, the owner of a few cows, started toting a revolver around. Finally, together with his two friends, Bruno and Nascimento, it was decided the stranger would have to leave town. They paid Claudino a visit and delivered the ultimatum:

"You have exactly three days to see to it that the stranger leaves town. In case he raises a fuss, we'll do our part."

That same night Claudino told the stranger what was taking place. He listened in silence, smiled, and said:

"That's perfectly all right, seu Claudino. I'll move on. Rest assured that I will cause no trouble for anyone."

On the third day – the day the stranger was to leave town – Claudino rushed into his room. He was a nervous wreck.

"Are you about to leave?" he wanted to know.

"I am. My three days are up today, aren't they?"

"Wouldn't you like to stay at least one more day?"

"I can't imagine why…"

"Deeply embarrassed, Claudino explained the latest developments:

"It happens that seu Gino's grandson fell out of a tree. He was hurt badly and has lost a lot of blood. Unless the boy gets a blood transfusion real quick like, he won't make it…"

"I don't get it," the stranger interrupted, visibly upset with what he was hearing.

"We were thinking… that is… we were just thinking…" Gino miserably began, "that maybe you could donate some blood… f you know what I mean."

"Me?!" the man exclaimed. "Why me? Are there no men living in this town? Don't they have blood in their veins?"

The explanation for this reluctance to give blood may seem strange today, but back in 1929 it was something quite normal.

Still searching for words, seu Gino continued, "It happens that none of the men here has ever given blood… and they're all scared to death. In fact… in fact, most of them have simply disappeared. The few of us who are left in town are either too old to give blood, or we have the wrong type… and so… and so, I was commissioned to ask you… to ask you… well, you know…"

"Where is the boy?"

"In the hospital… I… I could take you there."

"Let's go."

The stranger's type was right and in a short time his blood was flowing into the boy's veins, with seu Gino, the grandfather being a witness to everything. Soon the little fellow began to blink his eyes. The doctor announced, "I believe he'll make it."

The stranger left the hospital and went straight to the room he had rented and got his things around. When seu Gino realized the stranger was no longer with them, they began an anxious search, finding him in his room, where they begged him not to leave. In spite of all the apologies, the stranger mounted his horse and with a scornful look on his face, left town.

In Vila Cabral no one ever knew his name. ▲

Readers Write

More on Beggars

[It's easy to draw conclusions based on an isolated incident and forget that what we have seen is only one chapter in the person's life. Mim Dirks from her home in Mato Grosso wrote me the following letter.]

I read your article about beggars. If your first "beggar" was the old man from Cairo's Drugstore, then I have something to add. He taught me a real lesson a number of years ago.

One day I was by your store when along came two little beggar girls. They had a prescription and were asking for money to buy some medicine for their grandmother.

I don't know what was ailing me that day. I wanted to help the little girls, but I was doing it from my head, not my heart. I said, "OK, we'll go to that drugstore on the corner and buy the medicine you need for your grandmother."

I really thought they were wanting the money for something else and wouldn't go to the drugstore with me. But that wasn't the case. With a sigh of relief, one of them said, "Oh good!"

Their thankful tone already made me feel rather ashamed of myself, but I guess not enough. When we got to the drugstore, I showed the prescription to the man, – the one you wrote about – and told him I would pay for the medicine.

I thought that since we were dealing with a couple of little beggar girls, he would hand over the medicine to get them out of there as quickly as possible, and that I would then pay him. That would be that.

But no. He took the prescription, read it carefully, and said, "I see your grandmother has asthma. That's too bad!" He proceeded to have a conversation with the little girls. "Does your grandmother suffer a lot?" "Does she live with you?" "There, take this medicine to your grandmother and the Lord willing, she will soon be better."

Do you know whom the two little girls thanked? Not me. They thanked the man who took the time to treat them like they were the most important people in the world.

But I guess I still wasn't small enough. He wouldn't let me pay the full price of the medicine, "Because we who are more fortunate must help those who are less fortunate."

Ever since I've been more aware of the fact that not all beggars are poor. Some are well dressed, but inside they are begging for our care, for our understanding. And it takes so little to make a lasting impression.

One day when I was waiting in the dentist's office, a young married lady kept watching me. Finally she asked, "You're from the American Colony, aren't you?"

I told her I was. She continued, "Years ago I knew two men from the Colony. One was Pedro and I don't remember the name of the other. I know that both of them were killed in an automobile accident. Would you know who they were?"

Of course I knew who they were. Pedro was Pete Loewen and the other one whose

name she couldn't remember was my dad, Denton Burns. Then she told a little story that made me feel like I was the daughter of a millionaire, even if my dad didn't leave me much in the way of worldly wealth.

"One day when I was about four years old," she began, "some other children and I were playing on the sidewalk when this car with two big bearded men drove up. We were kind of scared, but the one got out and smiled. He talked to us a bit and then left.

"Pedro stayed in the car. He called us over to where he was. We couldn't understand a thing he said, except that his name was Pedro. Then he sang some little choruses with us. Just a few weeks later we heard on the radio that they had been killed. I cried. I've never forgotten them. Many times I have wondered what kind of a religion they had that would make them that way."

That was just one incident. I don't know how many times someone has asked me, "You're Denton Burns' daughter, aren't you?" They then say, "We liked your dad so much. He always had time for a cup of coffee with us." Many times I have no idea who it is that is talking to me.

One day Pedrão [a local implement dealer] ate at our place. The conversation turned to daddy. "Your dad used to tell me how I needed to straighten out my life."

All that in four short years. ▲

Colonization

Mato Grosso

[Excerpts of a letter received from Marlene, Mrs. Dan Kramer, who are settled on their farm in the Sorriso area of Mato Grosso.]

It's been six months since we've moved. Things are going real well. It hasn't been easy, but then we knew it wouldn't be. I think that about the hardest has been not having company. We went for five months with no visitors from Goiás, except for Glenn & Roger Hibner, when they came to plant their crops.

Land here is going like hot cakes. New owners are coming in and clearing land. Some plan on farming and others on ranching. There is still some land available in the area, but it isn't like it used to be.

When we first moved here we lived in tents. We went to the river to bathe and hauled water in barrels to the camp site for cooking, scrubbing clothes, etc. We rinsed our clothes in the river. What we call the river is actually the headwaters of a river, so at that point it is merely a beautiful, clear stream with lots of water.

During the time we lived in tents we had a cold spell, colder than any of us want to ever experience again while living in a tent.

Our first project was to get water up to the building site. At a nearby spring we built a little dam to raise the water level enough to be able to install a water wheel.

The first step in building the house was to pour the floor, which was troweled smooth and waxed, to protect the finish. Then came the framework. The walls are rough cut boards nailed onto the frame vertically. The lumber was all green, so once it had dried out, we had to nail slats over the cracks between the boards. The roof is made of corrugated asbestos. It took the men 11 days to build our house. We plan to put shutters on most of our windows, which is cheaper than glass.

Lumber is very cheap in this area, although most of it is unplaned. Some of the towns around here are strictly lumber camps.

We are going through a lot of things that the first settlers did on the Colony in Rio Verde 25 years ago. We have a lot of insects, like they did before the woods were cleared over there. Sometimes they're so bad that we girls and women have to wear trousers under our dresses. As we clear our woods around the house, we notice the insects begin to get less. We raise our chickens loose, like they used to on the Colony.

We have a large fenced in garden (to keep the chickens out) with over 20 different things planted in it, including three different types of melons and a number of different kinds of squash. We have also planted pineapple and papaya trees. Our orchard has both citrus and avocado trees.

As of now there are 17 families who have bought land here. If they would all move down, there would be over 50 children.

We have all done a lot of hard work. You don't get much accomplished without hard work. One time one of our children got a letter from someone. It said, "I suppose you do a lot of hard work out there. Does it hurt you? My Mom says it doesn't." That is how we have found it.

We still don't have a cow, as we have no pasture planted. However, where we planted rice, we mixed in grass seed. The rice will grow normally and after harvest the grass will begin to take over.

When the woods were cleared, the good wood was cut up for posts and firewood. Many of the trees are so soft they don't even make good firewood. A lot of timber was destroyed four years ago when a fire came though this area. ▲

Pirenópolis

In our General Annual Business Meeting here in Brazil, the Colonization report centered around Mato Grosso and Pirenópolis.

As many of you will remember, we have a mission in Pirenópolis. The little church there has advanced to the point where the present missionaries, Staven & Adeline Schmidt, are working in a supportive role, rather than full time. Partially self supported, Staven does custom work with his tractor for local farmers, many of whom have small tracts of land and don't own their own equipment.

One of the pluses of the Mato Grosso settlement is that land is cheaper (although it is going up fast). The Pirenópolis area, on the other hand, is beautifully located and is

an ideal choice for someone not wanting to face the rigors of pioneering. But the price of land is higher.

As the diagram shows, the area where land is for sale is located between Pirenópolis and Anápolis, a city of approximately 250 thousand inhabitants. So far as distances, it's 140 miles from Rio Verde to Goiânia, another 30 miles to Anápolis and 40 miles to Pirenópolis. The land for sale is approximately half way between the two towns.

Some of the land is quite flat and would be ideal for farming. Some is rolling and would be more suited for ranching. Approximate price: US$200 an acre. ▲

Something is Stirring

In the early days of the Colony, one of the most electrifying bits of news to make the rounds was, "Did you hear? So and so plans on moving to Brazil!"

But as time went on, these good tidings became less and less. In fact, the bulk of the people moved to Brazil between 69 and 80.

What went wrong? Why did people quit moving to Brazil?

There are especially two reasons:

The Revolution of 64. In 1964, five years before the Colony came into existence, the Brazilian military staged a bloodless coup, reducing Congress to a puppet organ and placing a succession of generals in the presidency. Ostensibly this was to stamp out the threat of a Communist takeover.

The questions we had to answer endlessly to N Americans visiting or writing us was: Aren't you scared something is going to happen to you? The answer was, no. So far as I know we were never in danger. Our serenity apparently wasn't very convincing to those looking on.

The second obstacle was our high inflation. N Americans were sure that with double digit monthly inflation, it was but a matter of time until the Colony would turn belly up.

Ironically, it was exactly this high inflation that put the Colony on its feet. Loans in the Banco do Brasil were made on a fixed interest rate, but payment was made with crops sold at inflated prices. In the beginning, farmers would finance a new tractor in the bank and then kick themselves for having done such a dumb thing. A year later, when making the first payment, they would kick themselves for not having bought a combine too. It's true that when inflation got really high, in the last five years, some bank loans really turned sour.

Democracy was restored eight years ago and today inflation is running at 2% per month. It is hoped that within two years it will be near zero.

What does this mean? I'm not sure, but I get the impression that here on the Colony people are seeing this as a green light for people to begin moving to Brazil again. In our Business Meeting it was suggested that our Colonization Board here report in the next Annual Meeting in N America on some of the opportunities that exist here today.

One obstacle to a new migration to Brazil would be our stringent immigration laws.

However there is a feeling that if a group would show interest, the government would grant a concession.

If any of you readers would like more specific information on what is available, prices, etc., get in contact with someone here. An effort will be made to answer your questions. ▲

Brasília

Now a Serious Country?

Quite a few years ago President Charles de Gaulle paid a visit to Brazil. Asked for his impressions, he is to have dourly replied, "Brazil isn't a serious country." What the French president lacked in tact, he made up for in accuracy. Politically, Brazil was not a serious country.

For the first time in the 25 years we have lived here, virtually all segments of society believe Brazil is changing. VEJA magazine, an abrasive critic and relentless watchdog of government policy, lately has been rather hard put to say anything really nasty about top echelon policy.

It is said that every 50 years a nation comes up with a truly great leader. Everything indicates that our new president (who took office January 1) will have that distinction in Brazil. The mentor of our new currency, the Real, he has been the de facto president of Brazil for the last year. Let's notice some of the changes which have taken place, many under his direct or indirect influence:

>For the first time in 30 years, Brazil has balanced its budget. It ended the last fiscal year with a 3 billion dollar surplus.

>Industry grew 6.5% during the past year and unemployment is the lowest in the last four years.

>Inflation is down from an average of one percent per day to two percent per month.

>The enormous foreign debt which for years stiffled growth and hung over Brazil like a toxic cloud, has been whittled down to where it is well within accepted standards for a developing nation.

>Hard currency reserves are a record high of well over 40 billion dollars.

>Inflation is being held in check with neither shortages nor a price freeze, which previously was never the case.

>Our recent elections showed a definite trend to vote for honest congressmen and public officials. While plenty of corruption remains, a start has been made in the right direction.

>It's possible that never before in the history of Brazil has the transition of power from one president to another been smoother than this year.

>State owned industry and utilities are being privatized. The greatest villains in

the plague of double digit inflation were exactly these state owned businesses that continually operated in the red. There is a good chance that even state owned banks will be privatized.

>Today 30% of the new vehicles being sold in Brazil are imported, evidence that something is changing drastically. This is not true only in the auto industry. More and more foreign products are being imported, forcing national industry to become more competitive.

>Banks, which for many years have made a killing on inflation, are now having to face up to a new reality. Without inflation, many agencies have begun operating in the red, as was the case with the agency of the Banco Nacional that has been operating in Rio Verde for well over 30 years.

>Everything indicates that the Cardoso administration will try to slowly up the minimum salary so the poor class can slowly migrate to the middle class. That will be the greatest victory of all.

If Charles de Gualle could make a brief tour of Brazil, I believe he would say, "Brazil is becoming a serious country." ▲

Literature

The Church in Nigeria Takes a Big Step

The last issue I received of *The Voice of Christian Fellowship*, the Nigerian Messenger, was a really pleasant surprise. It has been given a real face lift and now resembles it's American and Brazilian counterparts.

If you haven't done so yet, I suggest you take the time to subscribe to this periodical (through Gospel Publishers). It's a window into the Nigerian church. Not only does it have excellent articles, but also relates many of their general and youth activities. Often summaries are given of sermons and talks.

How many of you habla-españolers are subscribing to El Mensajeiro de la Verdad? ▲

Remembering Out Loud

Sleeping Policemen

Imagine yourself driving along in a 40 M.P.H. speed zone. Your day has gone well and you're relaxed. You even yawn, not really from being sleepy, but more because of not having a worry in the world at that exact moment.

And then it happens.

A deafening noise. Your steering wheel rises up approximately 12 inches above it's normal height. It doesn't become detached from the steering column, because,

fortunately, the rest of the car also rises 12 inches. The problem is that you, the driver, rise more than 12 inches and your head makes solid contact with the roof of your 11 month old Japanese import. There are strange grinding and scraping noises. The transmission pops out of gear. It appears that at least one front tire is flat. The contents of the glove box are randomly scattered on the floor. The muffler no longer accompanies your vehicle. You are no longer relaxed. Nor do you leisurely yawn.

Science fiction? Nope. An earthquake? Nope. Something the editor of Brazil News dreamed up? Nope.

Ladies and gentlemen, you have just hit a sleeping policeman. And believe it or not, it can be a lot worse than what was just described.

But before we go into that, just what is a sleeping policeman? A sleeping policeman is a transversal hump on a highway, placed there to slow down traffic.

These are the only "speed limit" signs that are empowered to act as judge and jury, instantly penalizing transgressors according to the severity of the infraction. And, may I add, they are the only speed limit sign a Brazilian will respect.

In the last five years these sleeping policemen have proliferated to where they are seen everywhere, not only in town, but also on highways. Most are placed there by the city or highway department, but others by irate citizens who live in the vicinity.

Sleeping policemen are made of concrete or asphalt. Some are only an inch or two high. If hit at a high speed, they can be mighty hard on tires.

Some, built with gentle approach, can be taken at a reasonable speed, but are disastrous if hit fast.

But then there are the truly murderous ones, usually built by irate citizens, like this one:

These can be up to 10 inches high and must be crept over, preferably at an angle. They can totally wreck the suspension on a vehicle.

On highways, the sleeping policemen are announced well in advance, not only by signs, but by miniature humps resembling a washboard, that also cross the highway transversally, like this:

These in no way damage the vehicle and do an excellent job of warning what to expect in another 50 to a 100 meters, where the humps are marked with enormous diagonal stripes painted on the highway.

A number of years ago in Rio Verde, the main highway, BR060, going to Goiânia was closed to all traffic by the populace, if I'm not mistaken, for almost a day. Where the highway goes through the edge of town there is a long hill and people used to drive through at an outrageous speed. I don't know how many were killed by these imprudent drivers, but with the last fatal victim, the highway was simply shut down by

the populace and kept that way until authorities agreed to immediately install sleeping policemen.

The Colony has a number of humps on the roads, but most of them are for water diversion purposes. I really believe that the ones at either end of the Monte Alegre church and school grounds are more for slowing traffic than water diversion. These are long and quite high, but can be comfortably taken at 30-40 M.P.H.

Why am I remembering sleeping policemen?

The other night I heard Ben Koehn tell about hitting a newly placed water diversion hump with his diesel pickup. By what he said, my discription on how it is to hit a sleeping policemen is too mild to apply to his experience. Anyway, one of his friends came by some time later and, by measuring where there were no tracks, found that for approximately 50 feet, brother Ben was airborn.

He made a safe landing, but I understand it wasn't the best for the pickup suspension. I hope he realizes that people who fly must have a pilot's license. ▲

This & That

I went into a store to buy nine meters of plastic pipe, which comes in six meter lengths. Since I needed to haul it in my little car, I asked the fellow if he could cut it into three meter lengths. Trying to be helpful, I asked him if he had a meter stick (a yard stick 39 inches long), so that we could measure the pipe. The man mumbled something about someone hauling off with the meter stick, or it being misplaced, or something or other. We were really up the creek, until he came up with an ingenious solution. Hesitantly the man suggested, "I do have this tape measure. Do you think it would work?" I checked it and found it was exactly three meters long. "Yes," I told the man, "I think we can manage with this." I went home with three 3-meter lengths of pipe.

I sat down in church and my nephew, sitting beside me, real innocently asked me, "How many American cents can you buy with one real? I have lived on Planet Earth long enough to know more or less when I am being victimized by a gotcha question. I had just published in BN that one real buys 85 US cents. I realized I had goofed, so I said, "It buys a hundred and some cents." Sagely he wagged his head, indicating I had answered wisely. When I got home from church the phone began ringing. More questions on how many cents can be purchased with a real. Some folks graciously suggested that maybe they, not I, are mathematically impaired. I even had a missionary call and diplomatically apprise me of my humanity. Anyway, I multiplied the real by the exchange rate, instead of dividing. The correct answer is US$1.18. Big deal. After all, didn't Quayle spell potato, p-o-t-a-t-o-e? Or something like that?

Enos & Clara Miller are spending some time in their home here in Brazil.

Cleuza, Mrs. Galen Coblentz, has returned to Ohio with her three children, after spending several weeks here with her relatives.

On December 16, William & Miriam Coblentz from the mission in Mirassol, São Paulo, brought Janete Duarte, the Portuguese teacher, back to the Colony here. They spent a few days here.

On Sunday, December 18, the Brazilian members had a carry in dinner at the Monte Alegre social hall. Since many of them don't have relatives in the church with whom to celebrate Christmas, this gives them the opportunity to have a family gathering, in a larger sense.

Milferd & Anita Holdeman and family from Georgia came to spend Christmas with the Holdemans in Brazil.

Deanne Schneider came with the Holdemans to spend Christmas with her sister Sharon, Mrs. Lowell Warkentin, and her family.

Spending a few days on the Sorriso colony in Mato Grosso were: Daniel & Ana Kramer, Dave & Marta Kramer, Glenn and Kevin Hibner, Divino and Isaac Cândido, Bert and Jon Coblentz, João Bernardes and Vilmar, a young man from the Patos mission who is visiting the Colony.

Luis & Maria Duarte are spending some time on the Sorriso colony, where they are building their house. Jorge & Dalva da Silva are helping them.

December 21 was the Rio Verdinho School Christmas program.

The Monte Alegre School program was on December 22.

The Leo Dirks family from Mato Grosso spent Christmas here. Their girls managed to go out caroling several nights.

Different other family groups did some caroling in Rio Verde during the Christmas season.

On Sunday afternoon, January 1, Clifford & Naomi Warkentin celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary at the Monte Alegre Congregation social hall. To qualify for a wedding garment, one had to be a relative, a close friend, or be at least 40 years of age and have moved to Brazil when already married. It was an interesting afternoon. Both Clifford and his brother Eldon reminisced about how life was 40 years ago in cold Canada. Several others also brought memories.

Wayne & Susan Froese are here to visit her sister Alfrieda, Mrs. Phil Martin.

On January 2 was the General Annual Business Meeting of the Church in Brazil, held at the Monte Alegre Congregation. Until now these meetings have been held in the evening, and as can be imagined, have been rush, rush affairs, trying to get through all the financial and activity reports, plus make decisions, in approximately two hours. It was decided that next year we will have both an afternoon and evening session, with a fellowship supper. The evening will be dedicated to some kind of an inspirational service.

It was decided in the Business Meeting that the bookstore in the Literature Center will be patterned after the Gospel Publishers bookstore in the US (in miniature, of course), plus school supplies will be sold.

On January 3 one of Daniel Holdeman's boys came to the literature center and excitedly asked if I wanted some news for Brazil News. Of course. Of course. Had

they spotted an anaconda or . . .? "No," he interrupted, "Aunt Irene had a baby at four o'clock this morning. His name is Rylan." And so, in an attempt to share his ebullience, I inform my readers that Irene, Mrs. Harold Holdeman, had a tiny, cute little baby boy at four in the morning.

The evening of January 4, Eldon Warkentin gave a report at the Rio Verdinho Congregation on the tract work in Germany and Russia, where he and his wife were stationed for a number of years. Everyone found it interesting.

At the Rio Verdinho Congregation, the new youth leaders are Errol & Karen Redger. They replace Dean & Esther Lou Mininger.

The new youth leaders at the Monte Alegre Congregation are Dennis & Vera Loewen, replacing Carman & Celma Loewen. On January 5, the youth had a churrasco (barbecue) at Daniel Holdeman's place, in honor of both the outgoing and incoming leaders.

Revival meetings at the Monte Alegre Congregation began the evening of January 6. The evangelists are Linwood Koehn and Keith Nightingale. They brought their wives.

I may have said this before, but here goes again. When addressing a letter to Brazil, put the zip code at the beginning of the last line, and not at the end, like you do in N America. It happens that the zip code in Lufkin, Texas is the same as Rio Verde's. When Post Office optical readers, which read backwards, pick up the zip code at the end of the line, the letter is immediately routed to Lufkin, and from there rerouted to Brazil. Your address should be something like this:

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