

Brazil News



No. 48
May 1995

Editorial

The Little Gift That Could

Children love the story of *The Little Engine That Could*. It makes them feel good to know that even though they aren't the biggest, or the prettiest or the strongest, or the smartest, they can still be useful.

Adults should occasionally read this story.

The old saying that if it's worth doing, it's worth doing well, is often unconsciously given a reverse application: If it can be done well, it's worth doing. This sets the stage for: If it can't be done well, then let someone else do it. With that kind of thinking the little engine that could would have ended up being the little engine that couldn't. It wouldn't have made much of a story.

There are brethren who are good at having an introduction to a worship or C.E. service. Often they read a few scriptures and make appropriate remarks. It's a good way to have an introduction.

In our local congregations here in Brazil we have brethren who came to the church as adults. Their Bible knowledge is often limited. When chosen to have an introduction in a C.E. meeting, some will trudge to the rostrum in apparent agony. Tensed up, they say a few shaky words and then begin to read scriptures. And more scriptures. They are ill at ease. And so is the audience.

What went wrong? They tried to imitate their more experienced brethren and didn't manage. They tried to use a talent they didn't have. While they must be commended for their effort, they ended up being the little engine that couldn't.

But it gives one a warm feeling just to remember brethren who sweat their way to the rostrum, tightly grip the pulpit, and say, "Well brethren... this is my first time up here... and I really don't know how to do this... and so... and so I'm going to tell you an experience I had..."

This experience is familiar territory to the brother. As he begins to speak, he releases

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his death grip on the pulpit, his voice ceases to tremble and he becomes at ease. So does the audience. What he has to say is just as inspirational as what any old-timer could have said. That little engine could.

Excellent articles are published in the Messenger of Truth. But what about the articles that aren't published because they were never written?

When someone sees his name on the bulletin board as being responsible for the introduction or having a talk in the next C.E., there is no graceful way out. That's the reason we sometimes hear beautiful introductions or talks from little engines that could. But the fact is that if someone hadn't posted their name on the bulletin board, it's a blessing we would have missed.

No one is forced to write an article for the Messenger. No names are ever posted on the bulletin board. And so we don't even know what we're missing.

The solution isn't posting names, but rather getting people to use the little gift that could. And that's what this article is all about.

The little gift that could is the ability to transmit feelings, to share the treasures which lie deep in the heart. This can be done orally or in writing.

Women's Sunday School classes tend to be more inspirational than men's. Men like to philosophize, to interpret scriptures, to dig up facts, to throw new light on a difficult subject. All this is good, but when nothing great is forthcoming, the discussion bogs down.

Women, on the other hand, don't aspire to such noble heights. They tell of an experience they had during the past week, of something that happened when the children were small, of how they dealt with a difficult problem. After one sister tells of a battle she often faces, another meditatively says, "I thought I was the only one who had that kind of problem." Now different ones speak up and tell how they have dealt with this particular problem. What a class!

Over the years many Brazilian members have sent their conversion experiences to the Mensageiro. Some come in beautiful handwriting and impeccable grammar. Others must be laboriously deciphered. From these hieroglyphics there emerges a simple story that wasn't revealed to them by flesh and blood. A beautiful story that speaks to the heart.

By no means is the little gift that could confined to little engines. Great engines also can – indeed, must – speak the language of the heart.

We have translated and published in the Mensageiro quite a few articles out of the books *Caring and Sharing*, by Mrs. Sam Boese. It was especially her articles that began with, "My name is...", which poignantly tell the experiences of young sisters who took their own way, that caught the reader's attention. They would write from different parts of Brazil identifying themselves with this one or with that one. Some asked for addresses, hoping to begin corresponding.

Why are experiences so important? Why can a simple experience sometimes accomplish more than an expert exposition of facts?

You decide to buy a new car. At the agency the salesman spends the whole morning

filling you with technical facts about his product. Yet there is a lingering doubt. If you go to the competition, another salesman will, with facts, cite the superiority of his product. Finally what do you do? You begin asking car owners of that particular model – even perfect strangers – if they like their car. “Best car I ever owned,” one says. “If I had it to do over, I’d buy one just like it,” another says. Those few words do more to convince you than three hours of technical talk.

Folks, that’s what we need in the kingdom of God – people who are sold on Christian life and are glad to tell others. Preachers can do this. The illiterate can do it. Land owners can. So can day laborers. Young people can do it.

And yet when there is opportunity to give an answer of the hope that is within us, we like to duck out of sight because we don’t know all the specs. We wish the preacher would show up about then. We miss the point. Most people don’t want a recital of the Eighteen Articles of Faith. What they want to know, above everything else, is if we are happy. Show them you’re happy and leave the specs for later. The little gift that could.

We are losing many blessings by being reluctant to express our feelings. We are being unfair to those who could profit by our experiences. Not everyone is cut out to be a salesman, but anyone who drives a car can tell if he is sold on it.

Not everyone is able to write a doctrinal article or a Sunday School lesson. But anyone who knows most of the alphabet can write an experience. It will take some touching up, but so what? That’s what editors are for.

The little engine that could made it up the mountain by saying: I think I can, I think I can, I think I can... For the little gift that could to be exercised, we may have to tell our brother or sister: I know you can, I know you can, I know you can... ▲

Paraguay

By Frank Giesbrecht

Our Trip to Paraguay

February 7, 1995 found us on the American Colony in Rio Verde and it was the long anticipated day for us to start for Paraguay. Daniel & Linda Holdeman took Bob & Evelyn Unruh from Texas and my wife and me, from Georgia, in their fairly new Kia van. Before leaving Rio Verde about 10:00 A.M., the vehicle was serviced to have it in the best shape possible for the long 3,000 km. Trip. Right away, as we headed south, we noticed that the road had no markers. The scenery was very pleasing to farmer eyes: rolling hills and beautiful Brahma cattle.

After spending nine nights in hotels along the way, we feel we can judge them as good. Each room had two single beds and a well-stocked refrigerator. You could help yourself to cool pop or hard drinks, candy, or crackers. While we enjoyed our free breakfast of ham, cheese, hard rolls, cafezinho and fresh fruit before checking out,

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someone would check the refrigerator in our room to see what we had snacked on. Breakfast was free, but snacks were added to our bill.

The roads were fairly good, except there were lots of trucks. Brazil does not seem to have many trains, so trucks handle the movement of freight. The mode of driving seemed different to us, but the Brazilians seem to understand it and it goes all right.

The first night we slept in Campo Mourão. The second evening found us near Iguazu Falls on the border between Brazil and Paraguay. Also a corner of Argentina was quite close by. We crossed the five mile road over the huge dam with its large generators. The bridge over the Paraná River was lined with people on both sides trying to entice the tourists to stop and buy. At the end of the bridge we had to go through customs in order to continue into Paraguay. We felt we were entering a poor country. The cars seemed to be older and later we saw ox carts along the way.

About fifty miles from the border we started getting to some nice farms which looked to us like they could be Mennonite settlements. Pretty soon we saw a young boy of about fourteen on a motorcycle. He took out with his wheels spinning. Some in our vehicle remarked, "That has to be a Mennonite!" We caught up with him and stopped him. Sure enough he was! Questioning him in Platt Deutsch, we asked about the community. He said there were lots of Mennonites there with names like Warkentin, Giesbrecht and Wiebe.

We turned in at the next farm we came to and found they were Warkentins. A girl of about sixteen was riding a bike. We asked to talk with her parents. Her mom came out. I told her my name in Platt Deutsch and that my grandmother had been a Warkentin when they lived in Russia. Then she was ready for a visit. We got out of the van and sat on chairs already lined up under a nice shade tree. It got to be lunch time. Mrs. Warkentin wondered, "If the food would be good enough, I would like to fix dinner for you." We were glad to stay. When we offered to pay, she would not have it. We enjoyed a typical good Mennonite meal of chicken-fried steak, noodles and gravy, fresh dill pickles and home-made buns.

The visit in Platt Deutsch went well. The four Warkentin girls sang us a few songs. As they sang, we noticed that the parrot in the garage was also singing. I never realized that parrots could sing Platt Deutsch! Next it was our turn to sing to them in English. Then we sang together, Gott Is De Liebe.

We left the Warkentins around 3:00 P.M., headed for the Somerfelder store. A few home-made toys and some dress material interested us. After making our purchases, we saw their church.

That night we slept in Asunción, the capital, and close to the border of Argentina. Menno Hiem was the name of a hotel there which had been built by the MCC. We would never have found the Menno Hiem Hotel by ourselves, but we saw a man on a motorcycle at a corner. We asked him if he knew where the Menno Hiem was. Yes, he knew and offered to take us there. He led us around through the city for a couple of miles and took us right to the unmarked door of the hotel. He would accept no money when we offered to pay him. It was a nice hotel and only

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cost us US\$14 per person for the night. They also served breakfast of bread, cheese, ham and coffee.

The next day we met a group from the US that was looking at land. They were going back to east Paraguay, so when they offered to take us along, we accepted. We saw lots more fine Mennonite country. It looked beautiful with the rolling fields of soybeans and corn, and pastures with sleek cattle. Land was selling for approximately US\$200 an acre.

At a Mennonite Country Store we got some good bologna sandwiches for lunch before catching a bus by the highway to return to Asunción and Menno Heim Hotel for another night. For supper we stopped where we enjoyed a churrasco.

Our next stop was the Filadelfia Colony. It was a six hour drive over good roads. When we arrived at a hotel, we called Seigert Schartner, a second cousin to Bob Unruh and Carl Schartner, who was also visiting there. He invited us to come for the evening to see a film on the first fifty years in Paraguay after leaving Russia. We found it interesting.

The following day, Sunday, we went with Mrs. Schartner to their church. Her husband had to go to another church to preach. It was all in high German, so we could not understand much. We did a little visiting after the service before returning to our hotel for lunch. In the afternoon we went to visit the Warkentins, who were relatives of those where we ate that first meal. They told us how they had translated the High German Bible into an Indian language. We made other stops and found people friendly, that is if you knew a language in which to converse with them.

For supper we returned to the Schartners. They had invited several couples, which we enjoyed, but it tested our Platt Deutsch about to the limit. The couples told many things about their hardships in leaving Russia, as well as adjusting to life in Paraguay. Some left Russia because they were supposed to sign a paper stating that their was no God and that Stalin was their god. Of those who would not sign, many were shot or sent to Siberia. Many left prosperous farms, comfortable homes, and beautiful orchards to flee for their lives. One remembered when 21 were shot at one time. Quite often the husbands and fathers were taken away to possibly be seen no more.

The government of Paraguay gave them the area around Filadelfia, the Chaco area. No one else wanted to live there. It was called the Green Hell because it was so hot and dry so much of the time. But the settlers have done well. The people stuck together to develop their own cooperative, milk factories, brick factories and banks. It is a self-contained country. It was interesting to see the many colonies, including an Indian colony, which they have helped very much. Even they talk Platt Deutsch!

There was no lack of talk on the return trip to Rio Verde. There were so many things to think about and remember. We made it in time to enjoy the Georgia reunion supper for about 150 people.

We enjoyed the whole trip and feel it was rewarding. ▲

Trip to Brazil and Paraguay

By Carl & Laverna Schartner

Laverna: I'd like to give you a report on our trip to Brazil and Paraguay. We were gone one month: four days flying, 20 days in Brazil, a day at Iguazu Falls and five days in Paraguay.

Carman & Celma Loewen got us from the airport. We ate at a "kilo" place. You put all your food on a plate, weight it and pay by the kilo. It is good. Then we went to the Colony.

A yearly event for some of the Colony families is making pamonha. Everyone helps. They husk green field corn. The corn is shredded by hand on special shredders. Then it is strained through sieves. This corn is mixed into different batches, with a base of corn, lard, salt and cheese. Sugar is added to some to make them sweet. In others they put sausage and hot peppers, making them salty. This mixture is poured into a cone made of corn husks, covered with more husks and tied, cooked and eaten. Yum! They're sort of like Mexican tamales.

After spending five nights with Phil & Alfrieda Martin from the Rio Verdinho Congregation, we spent some time at Glenn & Elizabeth Hibners from the Monte Alegre Congregation. Emma Burns is Elizabeth's mother. We helped celebrate her 73rd birthday. She loved to take us around in her alcohol driven car. It cools off a bit at night and then it gets too cold for the alcohol. So to start it in the morning, 1) turn on ignition, 2) pump the accelerator three times, 3) wait for one minute, 4) turn key, and there it goes!

We spent one Sunday in each of the three congregations. The two Colony congregations have everything interpreted. Everything is in Portuguese in the town church. On the day we were to church in town, we had dinner at Paulo David's place. We had a blessed time.

We also spent some time with Edna Loewen. Visiting Eldon Penner was a "special" as I knew him from the year I taught in Mexico. He showed us the school bell we used there. He had a hard time realizing I was "Miss Enns."

Carl (on the plane trip made to the state of Mato Grosso): We hired a six-place, single engine Brazilian made plane with retractable wheels (a copy of a Piper Cub). The pilot was a Brazilian, a wonderful young man. He knew what he was doing. It was cloudy and not clear enough to go by Visual Flight Rules, so the pilot waited two hours for clearer skies.

Finally, after 10:00 A.M., the pilot strapped João Souto and me (who were the lightest) in the tail seat, Reno Hibner and Stanley Schultz in the middle seat, with Glenn up front with the pilot.

At take-off we tried flying above the clouds at 6,500 feet. When it cleared we dropped to 3,000 feet. We could see miles and miles of good country on both sides of the plane, also, a river winding through where ranching could be done.

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We flew over Glenn's house and tent, the 200 acres of soybeans that are about ready to be harvested, his caterpillar tractor and other machines. We landed on a paved runway on a neighboring farm. We spent the night at the Kramer's homestead. All six of us were welcome, and even though the supper and night seemed primitive, they were very hospitable.

On the way home next day the pilot gave the children and older ones a plane ride. At the Leo Dirks ranch we came down and had a swell dinner. Here we landed on a grass runway close to a small town.

We had to refuel at a town called Barra do Garças. On this trip we were able to see from the air where all the Americans live. We landed at Rio Verde around 4:15. It was an excellent trip.

Laverna: On Wednesday, February 7, we flew from the Goiânia airport at 7:00 A.M. It was hard to say good-bye. Part of us stayed on the Colony. We flew to Iguazu Falls. They are magnificent! We took a helicopter ride and what a sight the falls are! Later we went on a safari – a wagon ride through the jungle. We walked down to the river and had a ride on a motor powered rubber raft. We enjoyed it.

The next day we flew to Asunción, Paraguay, and from there by bus to Filadelfia.

Asunción is the capital of Paraguay, with a population of about half a million. It covers a large area and looks huge from the air. A bellboy helped us. We changed US\$50 to guaranis, their currency, and got \$77,000. Later at a bank we got \$97,000. The banker suggested we pay the bellboy \$3,000 and the taxi \$30,000. When we paid the bellboy he got very disgusted and said, "poco, poco!"

What a taxi ride in and out of traffic at 120 km/hr. He usually stayed straddled in the middle so he could switch into either lane. One time a bus met us head-on in our lane. The taxi driver used his horn and finally the bus moved. Carl gave him a friendly slap. I laughed and prayed.

It took 30 minutes to reach our destination – the Mennonite House. This is a large hotel and restaurant. Everyone talks Platt Deutsch. The bus leaves at 2:00 for Filadelfia, so we got our tickets and then ate some dinner. We didn't have money to pay, so a lady from Filadelfia paid and said she'd phone Sieghard Schartners and let them know we were coming. We paid her for our dinner out there.

We got on the bus at 2:00 and went for the long ride. We crossed the big Paraguay River. A narrow pavement through the Chaco jungle, scrubby trees, palm trees and squatter's homes beside the road. It rained – inside and outside the bus. We met people from Switzerland that were going to buy land in the Chaco.

We arrived in Filadelfia at 8:30 that evening. We went to Aaron & Herta (Schartner) Klassen for the night.

That's how we began our five day stay in Paraguay. Nothing can describe it! First, everything is in Platt Deutsch or high German. There are three big Mennonite colonies. One was settled in 1927 by a group from Manitoba. Theirs is the Menno colony at Loma Plata.

In 1930 a group from Russia led by Gerhard Schartner settled in Fernheim, which is at Filadelfia.

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In 1947 a group from Russia settled in Neuland. Up From the Rubble, by Peter & Elfrieda Dyck, tells their story. This colony is at Neu Halbstadt.

Each colony has its own big cooperative, bank, stores, everything. There are 20-25 families in each of the surrounding villages, where they have their own church and school. They farm peanuts, sorghum and cotton. They have dairies and make delicious yogurt, plus all the other dairy products. Fernheim colony processes 62,000 liters of milk a day.

It was very hot. One day it got to 45°C – 114°F.

We saw how they started in 1930 and it made me cry. Their main theme is to have a thankful heart because God brought them there. They have a very big mission in converting the Indians. In 1930 there were 400 natives and today there are 17,000. In Filadelfia there are 1,300 Mennonites, 1,800 Indians and 900 Spanish. The Indians have their own churches with their ministers. Filadelfia has four big churches of different groups. We went to one of their services. It was interesting.

We felt a very warm welcome from the Schartners. We grew to love them. They are Carl's second cousins.

Now we've been home for a few weeks. We are so thankful for a safe trip. It's a dream come true. Thank you for all your thoughts and prayers.

A Few Explanations

Churrasco. I think I've commented on churrascos before, so this will be just a bit of a refresher. Pronounced shu-ha-sko, it means barbecue. The most memorable kind is the rodízio, pronounced hoe-gee-zee-o, in which waiters bring in different kinds of barbecued meat on spits and serve the diners until they are satisfied.

Kilo restaurant. Increasingly restaurants in Brazil are going to the kilo system, in which the plate of food is weighed. Very practical, they practically eliminate waste. At approximately US\$2.50 per pound, it makes for cheap eating. More on this in a future article.

Alcohol cars. Alcohol cars do start very poorly, as Laverna has reported. However, not all of them require the hocus-pocus to get them started that Mom's does. These cars come equipped with a liter tank for gasoline and a pump that injects a dose into the carburetor when starting on cool mornings. I suspect that the gasoline pump is shot and that her little liturgy is a work-around solution. ▲

A Brazilian Story

by Mário de Moraes

Dr. Valecio

On July 10 of 1972, a young man, 28 years old, presented himself to the board of directors of the Municipal Hospital in Mar del Plata, Argentina.

“My name is Dr. Juan Carlos Valecio,” he began. “I’m a federal inspector and work for the Ministry of Health.”

The board members looked at each other uneasily. They were very much aware that in many ways their hospital was not up to standard. They were constantly out of even the most essential supplies. Every day the nurses reported some new problem.

Dr. Valecio sensed the discomfort and put everyone at ease:

“I wasn’t sent here to create problems, but rather to help solve them. I’m not looking for people to blame. But if you all help me, we’re going to shape this place up in no time.”

He was as good as his word. Rolling up his sleeves he went to work, and work he did. The first thing he did was to assume administrative control of the entire hospital. Efficient workers were promised raises and the inefficient ones were given the option of improving or moving.

There was a daily staff meeting with the medical staff in which pep talks were given:

“Ours is an important mission. We must be careful to never let down those who have bestowed their trust in us. The government of Argentina believes in you and knows you will do your best to make this hospital a success.”

Between loans and purchases made on time, things changed rapidly. Operating rooms were refurbished, the entire hospital took on a new look.

When Dr. Valecio found out that the hospital was frequently without electricity, he didn’t hesitate:

“Let’s install a generator. Now.”

That’s exactly what happened. As can be imagined, astronomical amounts of money were spent and the treasurer had a serious talk with the inspector.

“Don’t worry,” Dr. Valecio said. “We have the government of Argentina behind us. They have authorized me to make the necessary changes here. As you know, there was no way for this hospital to continue the way it was.”

Unfortunately, Dr. Juan Carlos Valecio had only been on the job in the Mar del Plata Municipal Hospital for ten days when the police came to pay him a visit. Imagine the surprise of the medical staff when they discovered that Dr. Valecio carried false documents and was in no way associated with the Ministry of Health.

“What are the accusations?” one of the doctors asked.

“In just a few words, of being a fake,” was the reply.

It was true. Juan Carlos Valecio was not a doctor. Even so, the ten days spent in the hospital were enough to create strong ties with all those who learned to know him.

After the police had carted him off, a young nurse longingly said, “This place just won’t be the same without that nice doctor around.”



Education

First Aid

(Conclusion)

The story is told in our local town of a driver who hit a pedestrian. Totally beside himself, he placed the victim in his car and set out for the hospital, arriving there two hours later. The only hitch is that from the farthest point in town to the hospital should have taken a maximum of five minutes.

Take that story with a grain of salt. The following story I was personally involved in.

Back when I had my store, a large two story furniture store was built on the other side of the street. The scaffolding was poorly constructed and didn't quite come together on the corner nearest my store. Workers had to step over this gap as they walked around the building.

One day a man missed his step and fell, hitting an electrical line on his way down and landing on the sidewalk flat on his back. I was the first one on the scene. The victim was still breathing and had a rapid pulse.

The second one to arrive on the scene took one look and suggested cardiac massage. It never occurred to him to check if he really needed it. In less than a minute a crowd had gathered. A passing VW bug was stopped and pressed into ambulance duty. The victim, with the back of his head split open, was stuffed into the back seat of the bug and rushed to the hospital. He died.

The biggest challenge in a first aid course is to train the students to remain calm, to not lose their head. This is done by calmly and objectively discussing different emergencies. The instructor should collect interesting newspaper and magazine clippings which tell of different types of accidents and bring them to class to be discussed.

Children are squeamish about accidents because it is politically correct to be that way. They learned it from their parents and other adults. To swoon at the sight of blood is acceptable behavior.

Once children have learned that emergencies are solved by people who can remain calm and keep their wits, they have passed the most difficult hurdle in their first aid training.

So, lesson one is, "Keep your head." Lesson two is, "Use your head." In other words, look for the logical solution.

A child playing with a leaky garden hose will, without being told, tie a rag or plastic bag around the leak. They do it because it's the most logical thing to do. It won't be a perfect or permanent solution, but it's... well it's first aid.

First aid logic. The subject is poisoning. The instructor asks the students, "If someone dumped a handful of dirt in your dad's tractor fuel tank, what would he do?"

One of the students answers, "That happened to my dad once. My little brother dumped some dirt in the tank."

"Well, what did your dad do?"

"He spanked my brother."

“Then what?”

“He took the tank off and dumped all the fuel on the ground. Then he rinsed it out and put it back on the tractor.”

“OK class, now what are you going to do if your little brother swallows some poison? Spank him?”

“No! No!” different ones answer, somewhat amused, yet clearly perplexed.

“So what are you going to do?”

Hesitantly someone begins, “I suppose . . . I don’t know, but I suppose the idea would be to get the poison out of the stomach . . .”

“Exactly!” the instructor exclaims. “You’re on the right track. What will we do? How do we go about doing something like this?”

The class smart alec has his say, “I’m sure you can’t take his stomach out like Bill’s dad does with their tractor tank.”

Let’s break the dialog and make a little observation. This seemingly frivolous conversation is of inestimable value. Most important is that the children are using their head to come up with a logical solution. Secondly, if you ask them about this class 20 or 30 years later, they will probably remember part of it word for word. As this conversation progresses, poisoning will become a logical problem that they can do something about. We continue:

“Right on, Tobe. Your little brother’s stomach can’t be taken out, but you can take out of his stomach the poison that is making him sick . . .”

This brings us to the third step in first aid training, which is technique. Unfortunately most courses teach technique without the first two steps. Technique is teaching the students how to get the victim to dilute the poison, how to get the victim to vomit, etc.

Logic is good, but it has limitations. Coupled together with technique, it makes a qualified first aider.

Now for the suggestion. We have enough rescue squad members and nurses in the church to where we could come up with a good manual on Logical First Aid. This manual would be used by the instructors and not by the students. The student’s manual would be notes taken in class in a special notebook. But above all, it would be logical notes stored in the mind.

Does anyone second the motion? ▲

Fiction

A Fish Story

Once upon a time in a large river, there were many fish. There were baby fish, small fish, middle sized fish and big fish. There were daddy fish and mamma fish. And grandpa fish and grandma fish.

And of course there were the different species of fish. Some were numerous. Others were few in number, like the namedloh fish, that this story is all about.

Not only were the namedloh a small bunch, but they were somewhat different from the other fish. A non-aggressive species, they made friends easily with other fish.

The small namedloh fish studied in schools of fish to get a basic education.

River life was enjoyable, but it did have dangers: savage species of fish, fishermen, predators – both birds and mammals. The namedloh parents often spoke to their children of these dangers. Even though the teachers in the schools were of other species, they warned their students of the river dangers. The namedloh parents appreciated this.

But as time went by, a gradual change began to take place. More fishermen began to appear, not only on the banks and in an occasional row boat, but in large motor boats. Instead of using bated hooks, they now used cleverly camouflaged lures, and worse, nets.

Among the different species, there was a certain amount of alarm. Especially the grandpa and grandma fish realized that river life was becoming increasingly dangerous.

And there was reason to be alarmed. More and more fish – especially youth fish – were being caught by fishermen.

The namedloh became alarmed too. And perplexed. In spite of the fact that they diligently warned their children of these dangers, they began losing some of their youth. They didn't have the proper fear of the boats that cruised overhead. What was wrong with their teaching program?

Slowly the light began to dawn. Little fish began coming home from school saying things like, "Dad, do you know how many horsepower that big boat has that comes over every now and then, the one that makes that deep roaring noise?" Or, "Dad, today in school we swam right up to the surface and got to see the man who pilots that boat that comes through the first thing in the morning." Or, "Mom, do you know what we do at recess? We learn how to swim into the net of the fishing boats and back out again before they pull it in. It's more fun . . ."

A red light began to flash. Concerned parents began to check. Sure enough, their little fish were learning all about the different boats, where they were made, their specs, their crews. Students studying in the schools of fish were developing an insatiable desire to see the fishing boats close up. So that is what was taught, how to enjoy the fishing boats without being caught.

Parents came to the obvious conclusion: What the little fish were learning in school was in direct conflict with what they taught at home.

The red light kept flashing, but then some of the fish began noticing a flashing green light. What could it mean? "Simple," a wise fish said, "That is the light of hope. We must take our little fish out of the schools of fish and put them in our own schools."

"But we don't have schools!"

"Then we shall make them. Don't you see the green light?"

That is what happened.

The results were even better than expected. Fish were heard exclaiming, "Where would we be today if we didn't have our own schools?" Or, "Why didn't anyone think about this sooner?"

The success of these schools wasn't so much in teaching that fishing boats are dangerous. They seldom talked about this. Rather the success could be attributed to the fact that the schools taught nothing that would counteract the teaching of the parent fish in the home.

Not only were the fish parents happy with the healthy environment in their schools, but also with the education their children were getting.

The years passed rapidly and the quality of the namedloh schools was maintained on a high level. Quite a few of the teachers were career teachers. They did a splendid job.

One day, however, as a number of fish were swimming in little circles, talking together, one remarked, "Have you noticed something strange in our fish school meetings?"

"No," answered the others, somewhat surprised. What is it?"

"All the empty seats . . ."

"Now that you mentioned it," interrupted another fish, "not even half of the fish who should be there are present."

"As I was saying," resumed the first fish, "there are lots of empty seats. And have you ever noticed who is missing?" Silence. "Well I'll tell you. It's the young couple fish and the grandpa and grandma fish. It's those who don't have little fish in school. It seems like they don't have anything to say about school . . ."

"Nothing to say!" interrupted a third fish, puffing out his gills to lend importance to his words. "They've got plenty to say! It's just that they don't say it in the meetings. They talk about the high taxes, about expensive school buildings . . ."

Nothing came out of this conversation. After all it was just a bunch of fish thinking out loud.

A number of years later in a local fishgregation, the following announcement was made by the chairfish of the fish board, "School will not open on September 1 as scheduled. We are three teachers short and don't feel it would be proper to begin with only two. We hope you can bear with us. We're doing our best . . ."

Dialog overheard in a snack shop patronized by the namedloh fish:

Customer (to waitress): Well! What a surprise! Why would a school teacher be working in a place like this?

Waitress: Just a change of scenery. You know, I've taught school 20 years without a change.

Customer: In other words, you got tired of teaching?

Waitress (shrugging her fin): Yes and no. I love teaching. There's nothing I'd rather do. But times have changed. When I began teaching I had the feeling that the fishgregation was behind me. But today district fish feel toward a teacher a whole lot like they do the undertaker – they wish he wouldn't have to be around. And so I'm here serving snacks . . ."

In an (almost empty) fish school meeting several years later:

Fish: Brother chairfish, may I bring a few thoughts?

Chairfish: Certainly.

Fish: Having our own schools has been a blessing. I don't think anyone will argue with me. It of course was before my day, but they tell me that when the fishermen first came out on the river in powerful boats, we lost a number of our young fish in their nets and to their a-lure-ments. It was felt that public fish schools were partly to blame for this, so we began our own schools. They did a good work. But the question is: Do we still need them? I understand different fishgregations have shut theirs down. They feel their children not as gullible as their grandparents were when they were small fish. I feel we should consider the same thing. First of all, our private schools are very expensive. Secondly, our fish aren't getting an adequate education in our own schools. Thirdly, we know it's almost impossible to get teachers anymore. And fourthly, I feel public schools have made gigantic strides forward and that we can now safely send our children to them. So I make a motion . . .

Years later a white bearded fish swimming slowly beside his grandson remarks: Yes, I remember when the namedloh had their own schools. In fact, I went to one during first and second grade.

Grandson: Grandpa, what does namedloH mean? ▲

Remembering Out Loud

I Didn't Come

Different times I have written about the family that lived on the other side of the old Rio Verdinho bridge when we first moved to Brazil. The first one to get converted was Luís Duarte, who has worked for Walt Redger for quite a few years and has spent some time in the mission in the Northeast. Different ones of his in-laws also got converted. Finally his mother, shortly before she died, got converted.

Luís' sister Iracema, a teenager when we used to cross the old Rio Verdinho bridge, was exposed to the gospel. She lived with us for a number of months when we had our English school in Rio Verde. Then for years we practically lost track of her. She had a child, but her "marriage" didn't work out. She moved to a town some 200 km. from here.

In January of 94 her daughter, Janete, then 19, returned to Rio Verde to pursue her studies. She spent several days with her uncle Luís, exactly during the time when Mins. Isaac Akinyombo and Dewey Unruh were having a short series of meetings in Rio Verde. She attended the meetings and got converted. Then she, like her mother when about the same age, came to live with us.

Sunday was her wedding (See This & That). Her mother came up to Faith and me at the wedding and sadly said, "She came in, but I didn't" – meaning into the church. She realized she had had an equal opportunity but didn't take it.

Interestingly, this was the first wedding Janete attended in the church – her own. ▲

This & That

On April 8 Frank Coblentz from the Patos mission in the Northeast showed up to help his grandparents, Dan & Clara Coblentz, during harvest. And of course, spend some time with the youth here.

On Easter morning in the Monte Alegre Congregation we sang three songs written by Robert Lowry – two in English and one translated into Portuguese. Surely this poet never imagined that one day, many years after his death, his songs would be sung in central Brazil.

Cameron & Deborah Goertzen from the Goiânia mission are on furlough in the US. Daniel & Anna Kramer are filling in during their absence.

On April 12 in the Rio Verde Congregation, the Portuguese speaking members heard the Annual Meeting report, given by Elias Stoltzfus and Errol Redger.

On April 17 the Annual Meeting report was given in English at the Rio Verdinho Congregation. As mentioned here before, the reason for reports in each language is that it's very difficult to interpret this kind of a meeting. Furthermore, going through an interpreter the meeting gets entirely too long. Everyone seems to be satisfied with the present setup.

The Glenn Hibner family has returned to the Colony after spending approximately a month on their Mato Grosso farm.

A new road is being bulldozed through the Sorriso area that will make it much easier to get their crops to market. That's progress.

Somehow the following note from my good niece in Kenya reached me. Don't ask me how. She writes: "Dear U. Charlie, if you have not already been informed, in your January, '95 issue of BN you explained how to write the address on letters sent to Brazil. You wrote it in the way it should be and immediately afterward in the section where you state who BN is edited and published by, you wrote it incorrectly. Take care! Respectfully, your niece, Della Burns." Dear niece, it was worth making a mistake just to get your note from Kenya. Except that it isn't a mistake. In Brazil the zip code must always come at the beginning of a line, either before the city and state, or all by itself on the next line down – which I didn't mention in my little explanation. So we both win. BN

The Monte Alegre youth and their leaders, Dennis & Vera Loewen, did some yard work for Emma Burns one afternoon. They had supper at their leaders' home.

Veleda Loewen invited her students over for a formal dinner (supper, if you ask me), so they could practice what they learned in their Let's Polish Up book. First they played volleyball and after supper (oops, dinner) they put on a little program for their parents.

When I needed to refer to the last issue of BN, where do you suppose a copy was found? Yep, in Sylvia's bedroom. She is now a clandestine reader of this little paper. End of chapter 4.

Brazil ¹⁶ News

Sam & Erma Coblentz and Isaac from the Patos mission are having a short vacation here on the Colony. Well actually, I'm not sure it's a vacation. By the looks of things Sam was drafted into the harvest of natural grain. On Sunday evening, April 23, he gave a report on the work in Patos. It was the kind of report that makes you feel like heading out the next day and paying the place a visit.

We got a PBX installed in the literature center. No longer do you hear me yelling down the hall, "Steeeephen! Telephone."

Now for the new phone numbers:

Harold Holdeman 613 9163

Ileen Koehn 613 9164

Errol Redger 613 9165

Phil Martin 613 9166

On April 27 there was a bridal shower for Janete Duarte at the Paul Yoder residence.

On the April 30 weekend Stan & Mary Schultz paid the Leo Dirks family a visit in Mato Grosso. Leos' Daughter Jessica came back to be in on the weddings (That's plural. Keep tuned in.)

May 1 was – always is – a holiday here. Labor Day.

On May 7 Edinei Silva Alves and Janete Duarte da Silva got married in the Monte Alegre church. See Remembering Out Loud.

Staven & Adeline Schmidt from the Pirenópolis mission were out for the wedding. Edinei has worked for Earl & Johanna Schmidt, Staven's folks, for ten years.

William & Miriam Coblentz from the Mirassol – São Paulo mission were out for the wedding. Janete lived with them for several months when they first got to Brazil, giving them Portuguese lessons.

On May 8 Bert & Ada Coblentz returned to the US. They hope to return in approximately three months.

On May 9 the Monte Alegre and Rio Verdinho sewing circles had a baby shower for Isaac, the little boy Sam & Erma are in the process of adopting. This was in the M.A. social hall.