

Brazil News



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Editorial

Almost

You have an important appointment in a distant city. You know what time your plane is to leave, but even so you run behind schedule. Rushing up to the airline counter, you are told that your plane has just left. With a sympathetic smile the lady says, “You almost made it.”

A man working for a rich fazendeiro – landholder – was involved in a serious accident. A section of his spine was crushed resulting in paralysis of his lower limbs. Both arms were fractured. Needless to say, his condition was quite serious.

As you slowly return to the parking lot, you rehearse what went wrong. The girl at the desk did admit that if you would have come one minute earlier, she could probably have gotten you on. If you would have known how things would turn out, with a little extra effort you could have gotten there a minute earlier, or even five or ten minutes earlier. The fact that you were only 60 seconds late is really no consolation.

He was taken to one of our local hospitals, where most of his body was enclosed in a cast, which included both of his arms, in preparation to being transferred to a hospital in Goiânia for more specialized treatment. His boss hired two men, one to drive his pickup with a canvas camper, and the other to ride in the back with the patient, who was lying on a straw mattress. Soon they were on their way.

You receive a call from the local hospital and are told your child has been in a serious accident. You drop everything and rush to the emergency entrance, where you are met by a somber doctor. “I’m sorry . . .” he begins, and ends, “. . . If they would have gotten him here a minute sooner, we could have saved him.”

Several hours later the man was back, now lying on a gurney, in the emergency room of the same hospital. The air was permeated with the acrid smell of burned flesh, for his entire body was severely burned. His head was rapidly swelling, giving him a monstrous appearance.

Sixty seconds can easily make the difference between life and death in a medical emergency. We don't think of that so much until it is our child that got in 60 seconds too late. As you plan for a funeral, the fact that he almost made it on time is no consolation.

After doctors had done all they could, the patient was taken back to his room, swathed in bandages. Semi-conscious, with his head ever enlarging, he knew his end was at hand. At the end of each prolonged moan, his jaws would rattle, creating an unearthly noise. Occasionally he would build up enough strength to say in a trembling voice, "Amanhã vocês estão livres de mim." – "Tomorrow you'll be rid of me." I don't know how long into the night this macabre scene continued.

You are driving 30 miles to work every day. There is a job opening in a business establishment several miles from your house. Beside the obvious advantage of being much closer to home, the pay and the working conditions are better. You go in for a job interview. So do quite a few others.

True to his prediction, the next morning we were "rid" of him. Taken to the morgue, loving nurses tenderly placed flowers on his deformed body.

The phone rings. It's the director of the personnel department of the business where you applied for a job. He says, "You almost made it." He goes on to explain what it was that tipped the balance in favor of another applicant. You thought of it before going in, but didn't think it was that important. It was though. As you drive 30 miles to work every day, and 30 back, the fact that you almost landed a job near home where you would have driven a total of only four miles and made better money, is no consolation.

When the pickup left the hospital, headed for Goiânia, everything was in order. The driver was up front and his partner was in the back with the patient. We don't know how far they traveled like this. We do know, though, that at a certain place along the way the pickup stopped and the man who had been paid to ride in the back got out and climbed into the cab with the driver.

You feel the urge of writing someone a letter of encouragement. But you're not sure the person is even discouraged. So you hesitate, that feeling becomes stronger. Finally you decide, "I'm going to write." You sit down one evening, get out paper and pencil, and begin, "Dear . . ." Once again that thought returns. What if he isn't discouraged? Won't my letter seem really strange? You chunk it into the trash.

This change of positions was possibly prearranged. Maybe the one in the back tapped on the window, motioning for the driver to stop. Or maybe the driver felt like he needed a little company up front. This little detail really isn't important. What we know for sure is that soon they were again traveling. Now there were two in front and one in back.

The person whom you felt to write was discouraged. Very discouraged. He felt no one remembered him, no one loved him any more. So he gave up. The letter which you almost wrote could easily have weighed the balance the other way. In eternity, where all things will be known, will knowing you almost wrote a letter, that could have saved him, be of any comfort to that lost soul?

As they drove along, we don't know what they discussed. Maybe their job, the upcoming soccer game, something they saw on TV, you name it. Whatever it was, they apparently became quite engrossed in their conversation. So engrossed that they weren't aware of what was happening several feet behind them, in the camper.

A salesman drives into your yard and offers you a new tractor for an incredibly good price. You can hardly believe your ears. It's the chance of a lifetime. But there are two problems. First of all, your old tractor, which really isn't all that old, is still doing a good job. And secondly, you don't have money to trade tractors. You tell the salesman you'll need several days to think it over.

When the straw mattress was placed in the back of the pickup, very likely no one paid any attention to a small hole in the bed. But as fate would have it, this hole was directly over the muffler. Slowly the mattress began to heat up, then to smolder, and finally, fanned by the air rushing through the airy canvas camper, burst into flame.

Your wife recognizes that the offer really is a chance of a lifetime, but even so she suggests you drop it. Down deep you know she is right. You decide to pass this deal up. When the salesman drives up for his answer, you tell him your decision. He says, "I'll tell you what, I'll knock off another 500 dollars." On the spur of the moment, you say, "It's a deal." You almost didn't buy the tractor. Five years later you haven't lost only the tractor, but your farm also. The tractor was the straw that broke the camel's back. You find no comfort in the fact that you almost didn't buy the tractor.

Try and imagine what it would be like to be lying in the back of a pickup, alone, with your lower members paralyzed and the rest of your body in a cast. Except for being able to move the tips of your fingers and slightly turn your head, you are totally immobile. You smell smoke. At first you don't know where it is coming from, but then the upper part of your body begins to feel the heat. You scream for help. You try to wave your arms, but they are held fast by the cast. The heat becomes intense...

Almost. Why do we find it so comforting when we are asked to do something, and we almost do it? The Lord asks us to do something and we almost do it. We place a high value on our good intentions.

You wiggle your fingers and you holler. That is all you can do. The pain is unbearable. The entire mattress is now in flames. Your face is being seared. Nearly suffocated by the smoke, you can no longer scream. Where is the man who was paid to take care of you? Suddenly the driver of the pickup breaks violently and pulls over to the side of the road. Even before the pickup has stopped, the door on the passenger's side opens and your man jumps out and with his face aghast looks at what is left of you. Can you imagine what that would be like?

Almost. What a strange word. For some it consoles. For others it is a curse.

That night in the hospital, very likely his last words were, "Tomorrow you'll all be rid of me." The man who was to ride in the back of the pickup almost did what he was told. He merely moved up several feet from where he was supposed to be. But because of this little move, he was unable to hear the cry of the man in the back. He could have

looked back through the window, but apparently he didn't. When they started out, he may have a few times, but then he forgot.

Almost. The five foolish virgins almost made it back in time to greet the bridegroom. King Agrippa told Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." The Lord told King Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites. He almost obeyed.

As the man lay dying in the hospital, the man who was paid to take care of him in the back of the pickup was off somewhere else. He may have blamed everything on the little hole in the floor. Like Saul, he almost did what he was told. But not quite. He wasn't around when the man said his final, "Tomorrow you'll be rid of me."

He died in flames because someone almost obeyed. Many will some day live in flames for the same reason. ▲

Education

An Illiterate Mayor

In Brazil, mayors are responsible for the administration of the entire municipality. Since municipalities quite often are large and include a number of cities, this gives mayors a lot of clout. So much, in fact, that federal congressmen will often resign their position to run for the job of mayor.

In the northeastern state of Pernambuco, the municipality of Quixaba [pronounced kee-shaw-ba] has an illiterate mayor. If it's amazing that an illiterate would win the election, it's even more surprising to know that he is doing an excellent job as mayor.

Veja Magazine interviewed Antônio Ramos da Silva, age 49.

Veja – According to the Constitution an illiterate cannot run for a public job. How did you manage to become the mayor of Quixaba?

Silva – Before I became mayor, I was a commissioner. This was possible because before I ran for public office, I hired a teacher to go to my house at night and teach me how to draw my name. So when I went to register as a voter, I was able to sign my name instead of leaving a digital impression. Since I can sign my name and count, before the law I'm no longer illiterate. For all practical purposes I'm totally illiterate.

Veja – Didn't anyone challenge your legitimacy as a candidate?

Silva – During the campaign some of my adversaries did some mud slinging. They said that someone who can't read or write can't possibly be a good mayor. Ridiculous. I'm illiterate, but I know the difference between what is right and wrong. This is a lesson that life teaches better than schools. I have never stolen, nor am I intimidated by someone who has a diploma. I have a good idea of what needs to be done to up the standard of living of my constituency. I decided that my first priority as mayor would be education.

Veja – How were the public schools in Quixaba before you became mayor?

Silva – Things were so bad that I had to take office in the church building. The

judge was afraid that the roof of the city hall would come down on us if we had the ceremony there. But even that was good in comparison with our school system. Quixaba had eight phantom schools, that is, schools that existed only on paper. Every school in the surrounding towns had a teacher, some more illiterate than I. Some of them didn't even know how to draw their names. Yet they were all on the municipal payroll as duly qualified teachers, even though they got almost nothing. Ten teachers had to split one minimum wage [of \$100 a month]. The students had no desks to sit in.

Veja – What did you do about it?

Silva – Education isn't something complicated and it doesn't require a lot of money nor big projects. The first thing I did was buy two truck loads of desks. I had to buy them on time, but at least we got our desks. Next I hired some college trained teachers. I had to cut costs in others areas so that I could pay the teachers better wages. Today a teacher that works an eight hour day gets \$210 a month. Only the mayor and his immediate helpers make more than that. In the neighboring municipalities the teachers are still making only \$10 a month.

Veja – Did you have any trouble getting rid of the professorinhas [literally little teachers, but really meaning “fake” teachers] and putting the college trained ones in their place?

Silva – I had one awful time. People criticized me because I didn't give work to home people. Some even wanted to throw stones at the outside teachers. But I didn't back down. I said we had to change the educational level of this municipality. I told them that today they didn't understand, but with time they would have to admit I was right. This went on for a year and then things settled down when they saw our schools were improving.

Veja – How is life for an illiterate mayor?

Silva – Anyone who has gone to school can't possibly imagine what it is like to be illiterate. It's like living in another world, a world in which everyone speaks a strange language. I'll have to admit that I envy people who can read and write. Whenever I travel I have to take an assistant along, or a teacher. Otherwise I can't do a thing. I can't even read the street names. This is awful. I'd like to be able to read books and learn new things.

Veja – Why didn't you go to school?

Silva – My dad had the idea that his children needed to work, and only work. He said that people who didn't have anything to do studied. I wanted to go to school, but how? I had to obey my dad. Back those days children didn't challenge their parents. The price of disobedience was a whipping. Today that is different.

Veja – But once you grew up, didn't you want to study?

Silva – I'm a simple fellow who has always worked in the field from sunup to sundown. I never had time to go to school. What I know in life I learned out in the field. Today I'm happy, even though I have no intention of buying a fancy car or owning a lot of land. My greatest desire is to learn to read and write. An education is the most important thing in the world. Money is good, but it goes from hand to hand. I know some folks who used to be rich and today are poor. Others didn't have anything and

today are millionaires. But an education is different. What a person learns he takes all the way to the grave with him. It's a treasure no one can rob. After my term as mayor expires [Mayors can't serve two successive terms], I want to study. But in the meantime I want to give others the privilege of studying.

Veja – How was your childhood?

Silva – I have 11 brothers and sisters. I was born poor, but I never had to go hungry. My parents made rapadura [a homemade brown sugar that resembles a brick] and planted corn and beans [by hand]. They didn't know how to read either, but they always kept a plenty of grain on hand for the dry season. We were an exception in our community. Most of the children died of malnutrition before their first birthday. Even though we had enough food, life wasn't easy. I went barefoot until I was 18, when I bought a pair of thongs made out of tire rubber. Until then the only clothes I ever wore was a pair of bermudas. That's all. When I turned six, my dad began getting me out of bed at five in the morning to take the animals [probably goats] to the pasture. I would get up at four because I didn't like for people to tell me what to do. I didn't like to work for others. I knew what my job was. My breakfast was coffee sweetened with rapadura, and corn bread. Once in a while I would get an egg too. I would take a cuscuz [a tamale like food] and coffee to work for lunch. For supper we would have beans and rice cooked in lard. We worked non-stop – saints days, Sundays and holidays.

Veja – Since you don't read and write, do people ever try and take you for a ride?

Silva – I'm always on the guard so that won't happen. When I had a little store, I invented my own little charge account system. I would identify each customer with a letter. Since I knew how to figure, I was able to keep things straight like this. On my job as mayor, I make everything my business. When I have a school built, I oversee everything. When the first brick is laid or the rafter put in place, I insist on being present. I'm the engineer, because I want everything to be done right and so that no money will be thrown away. That way no one takes advantage of me. I don't like to leave my problems in a drawer. The municipality may be owing money, and if a sick person needs help, if necessary I pay out of my own pocket so he can get medical attention. I don't like to see people dying without a change to get help. When we have a bad drought [something that frequently happens in that part of the country], I furnish school lunches not only for the teachers, but for their families too. If higher-ups think I'm doing the wrong thing, I tell them I'm doing what's right.

Veja – What do you think about the real, our new currency?

Silva – In the beginning I didn't have any faith in the real, but today I see things are getting better. Time will tell. The big problem in my area is that a lot of people have gone broke. The State Bank of Pernambuco has laid off 1,700 workers. This hurts way down in the bottom of my heart. I know how to work out in the field. I can butcher a pig when necessary. But people who work in the bank only know how to handle money. If they head out for the field, they die of starvation. One bank teller went crazy, because that is the only thing he knew how to do. Unemployment makes people get sick. That's why I'm still leery about the real. It may be that the government will solve this problem up ahead. We'll see. ▲

An Allegory of Two Cats

By D. J. Holdeman
Clarksville, Texas

We have two cats, and not really being a cat lover, I called them Sin and Corruption. The names stuck. However, I am afraid that Sin and Corruption have changed my outlook on certain things just a bit.

Corruption is an ugly creature, but Sin really is quite cute, an interesting little kitten, even though I try to put on I don't think so.

Sin is tri-colored, with gray being the predominant color. She is always ready to be pampered and petted. She approaches me in a quiet, sly way, but once she has my attention, becomes bold. Sin likes to rub against my leg and wiggle her little tail. And let's face it, she's hard to resist.

Sin is gregarious and always goes ahead of Corruption. It seems Corruption looks on with longing when Sin has my attention, just waiting for a favorable time to also have a special part of my life.

When I open the door to our home without thinking about my two cats, all too often Sin slips in and hides away in some corner. Then when someone tells me I have let Sin into the house, I am surprised. Usually when this happens, I take her right back out.

But sometimes when my children have become involved and they beg for a little time with Sin, I give in. It even happens that I forget that she is in the house. But before long Corruption is sure to follow. Through past experience I have found the best policy is to cast Sin out the moment she appears.

One thing I must remember. Even though I have a pet Sin that I at times have coddled and petted, kittens don't stay kittens. They grow up and become cats. And then what...?

The Rest of the Story

The above story is true. Sin and Corruption's mama is a long-haired Persian that showed up at our door one day. Since we had an oversupply of mouse-killing cats, I was all for helping her reach her final destination as quickly as possible, but . . .

Behind our house was a pine thicket. One day early last summer I decided to clean it up, so I burned it off and cleared the brush. Several days later my wife sent an urgent message to the shop where I was working. "Come quickly! There's a rattlesnake in the yard!" Evidently the fire destroyed it's habitat.

I had quick mental visions of a little six to ten inch ground rattler, but when I got up close, I could see a Timber Rattler, approximately four feet long, three inches in diameter, and a head two inches wide when flattened out.

This menace was coiled up, ready to loose its fury in a flash and rattling for all it was worth. Just about three feet from it was that old stray cat, unnamed and unwanted, the very mother of Sin and Corruption, stalking this dangerous serpent.

The snake would move its reared-up head back and forth, and the stray would do the same, never losing eye contact, but continually creeping a little nearer . . . a little nearer . . . until she was only about one foot away.

I watched, dumbfounded, knowing there would soon be one less stray cat around. I couldn't figure out why the snake never struck.

The important lesson that Mother Nature was about to teach me was interrupted when my children, now ardent defenders of the cat, demanded I call off the duel.

One day, some time later, my wife saw a snake's tail sticking out of the cat's box. She got the hoe to kill it. But when she took a good look into the box, she saw two small kittens chowing down on a reptile dinner, acquiring a taste for the finer things in life.

Since then I have talked to various people who had snake-killing cats.

I have a notion that the stray is here to stay. ▲

My Trip to the Colony

By Mara Adriana Araújo Cavalcante

[Adriana, as she is called, is from Acaraú, Ceará. She came out for revival meetings with the Daniel Kramer family. They flew out, but returned by bus, which explains why she dedicates more time to the return trip in this little report.]

What did I think about the Colony? I am going to be as open as possible. My visit to the Colony is an experience I will never forget. I was very favorably impressed. Obviously I wasn't there long enough to learn to know everything, but this first impression is what is sticking with me.

On the Colony I learned to know a lot of interesting people. I visited different homes. Obviously, in some I felt more at home than in others. In these visits I became acquainted with how people talk, how they think, what they eat and drink, how they have devotions. I was able to be in on some of their lighter moments and also to get in on a few of their problems. But in all this I was pleasantly surprised.

Some asked me what I thought about the church, if it was better or worse than I had expected. I'll repeat here what I told them. The church was better – much better – than I had expected. I don't think of the church as a haven for angels, but rather as a hospital for sinners, because I know we all are still in the flesh and have our faults.

Now I want to tell about our return trip. Monday, January 29, was a sad day for me, because I had to leave the people who had now become a part of my life. The only solution was to look ahead and continue on my way. After all, I did need to go back to my family, to my job – and to my problems.

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We went to Goiânia by car, where Daniel & Anna updated their I.D. cards. We spent a little time at the mission house and then went to the bus station. When we were just about to leave, Arlo & Priscilla Hibner showed up to tell us good-bye. We left at 7:30 p.m. and got to Brasília at 11:00 p.m. We changed to a very comfortable bus that had only 26 passengers, which meant that each one could stretch out on two seats.

We traveled all night and the next day we stopped at a place in Bahia to have lunch. That is where we had one big mix-up. Here's what happened. A fellow who worked for the bus line wanted all 26 passengers of our bus to split up between two other buses. Some of the passengers were to go on one bus, but their luggage would go on the other bus. And to make things worse, these two buses didn't even go to Patos, where we wanted to visit the mission before going home. That meant we would have to change buses to be able to get to Patos.

The bus line official explained to us that a bus that had left some time after we did, broke down on the road. There were women and children on the bus and the weather was very hot, so they needed our bus to go back and pick those passengers up. But the passengers on our bus weren't at all happy about this arrangement and there was almost a fight.

Now can you imagine Daniel Kramer in the middle of something like that? When he saw what was going on, he left the group and went to talk to the official, who promised to try and get our luggage into the same bus that we would be traveling in.

All this confusion lasted for several hours. I finally told Daniel he should go talk to the fellow again. Otherwise they would end up forgetting us. This whole thing had me somewhat worried, but I knew God could get us out of this pinch. So we went and talked to the man. He took our luggage and put it into the bus that we would be traveling in.

The bus line official looked at Daniel and asked, "Are you a priest or a pastor?"

Daniel smiled at him and said, "No sir, but I'm a missionary."

The man said, "I figured you were something, because you acted so different from the rest of the crowd."

Really we were quite different from the rest. We were the only ones who weren't standing up for our rights.

We traveled the rest of that day, during the night, and then at noon the next day we stopped in a little town in the state of Bahia to have lunch. This is a lunch we won't forget so soon.

Our bus had no sooner parked than a man came walking up trying to sell some kind of tea that was supposed to cure all kinds of ailments, including stomachaches. Everyone thought this was sort of a joke, because we were all starved and really weren't interested in drinking tea.

We went into the restaurant and ordered our meals, but the food was so awful that people just tasted it and then shoved their plates back. That food was even worse than the tea the fellow was trying to sell us.

When we got back to the bus the fellow was still waiting. He asked, "Now do you want to buy some tea?"

I said, “No, I don’t. But now I know why you’re selling tea for stomachaches over here. Anyone who eats that food in there will need some of your tea.”

He smiled at me and said, “Lady, do you know that that’s the truth?”

We traveled for three days and two nights on the bus, which was enjoyable in spite of some crying children. The important thing is that we got there safe and sound.

(In my next letter I’ll tell how our trip was from Patos to Acaraú.) ▲

Paulo David’s Column

Love Will Speak

Many times I have asked God how we could have increased our efficiency in the work of evangelism. At times we look at evangelism as a work to be done, as an effort to be made. We have the tendency of thinking that evangelism is simply a natural consequence of the Church’s witness.

This thought isn’t totally wrong, because the power of the gospel is in the fruit that it produces in our lives. But we should never think that this is the extent of the work of evangelization.

The apostle Paul asks, “How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” We can’t neglect the preaching of the Word, nor the literature program, which plays an important role in this work. Neither of these, however, can take the place of the personal touch.

God has blessed the tract work, taking the message of the gospel to places where we can’t go personally. But we can be sure that tracts will never do that which I must do. The tract doesn’t take away my obligation to speak, but merely fills in when my voice can’t be heard.

To tell of the Love of God isn’t a blessing only for the hearer, but is also fundamental for Christian growth in the message bearer. We know that Bible reading, prayer, and fellowship are necessary to spiritual growth, but how many times don’t we end up forgetting that witnessing also contributes to growth? The Christian who dedicates himself to study and prayer, but neglects personal witnessing, may end up somewhat unbalanced, which will affect the fruit produced. Could this be one of the reasons we can’t come up with enough missionaries? We must be active in this labor, not simply because the lost need to hear the message, but above all to bring glory to God, and then for the enrichment it brings to our own life.

Jesus is our great example. He walked close to His heavenly Father, but he also walked close to sinners. The message of salvation came from God, so we need to be close to Him, but since this message is for man, we must learn to know him so that we can love him.

In our home environment we can become acquainted with the message, but we also need to become acquainted with those to whom this message is directed, because many times it needs to be interpreted to the individual need.

We sometimes make the mistake of trying to transmit this message in the “language” of those who were raised in the church. We speak to people and wonder why they don’t seem to understand what we are saying. Expressions such as: the weight of sin, repentance, new birth, years of accountability, have very little meaning to someone raised in a non-Christian environment. It isn’t surprising that so many times when we use these terms, we get blank looks. We should always try and discern between those who are rejecting our message and those who simply don’t understand.

In my own experience, I have found that there are those who are spiritually illiterate. Incredibly, as this world becomes more modern, more and more people are becoming spiritually illiterate. It isn’t enough to speak. We must know how to speak.

If we try and spread the gospel with a hands-off policy, we lose contact with those who need to hear, and finally we cease to love them. The result is a work without power and which produces no results.

Another error into which we sometimes fall, is to believe that the spreading of the gospel is the work of the “church,” that is, of the ministers, deacons and missionaries – thus detaching ourselves from any practical involvement. If we, as individuals, have become acquainted with the love of God and are enjoying His pardon, how can we be silent?

Let’s do our part in telling the story to others, beginning with what God did for us personally, and then telling the lost what God wants to do for them. Isn’t this the way to spread the gospel? ▲

Missions

When We Are Made Fools

No one likes to be called a fool. For that matter, no one likes to be a fool. And yet there are times when, with the best of intentions, we become fools. Or so it seems.

In BN no. 54, we told the story of a man who called to the Colony and asked a lot of questions about the church and her doctrines. He wanted to know if he could pay us a visit, and was told he was welcome.

Some six weeks later he showed up and spent a few days on the Colony visiting different homes and attending several church services. Generally speaking, a good impression was made. He said he wanted to bring his wife so that she could learn to know the church close up.

Shortly before Christmas he showed up with his wife and three small children. That’s where we had our first misgivings. The few suitcases they brought with them apparently contained all their material possessions. Since he didn’t offer many explanations, few questions were asked about this particular detail.

In an effort to acquaint them with the general function of the church, different families graciously took them in. That is where the second misgiving arose. Their children, fine little children, were little terrors in the presence of the parents. There was

nothing too high to not crawl up on, too low to not crawl down to, too small to not crawl into, or too sacred to not wreck.

While we don't expect that people not raised in the church will train their children the same as we do, this went beyond that. And strangely, when the parents weren't around, the children were sweet and obedient.

Then, when at one of our families, the man had an accident. He got kicked by a horse (which he was told he shouldn't ride), injured his knee and had to have surgery. Needless to say, this complicated things considerably.

Another misgiving began to form in the mind of those who took them in. Very little effort was made to help along in the work they were creating, or even to lessen it. They seemed to be perfectly content to let this situation drag on indefinitely.

And then came the worst misgiving. Increasingly they made it plain that their concept of the true church, for which they were supposedly searching, was having all things in common, like was done in the primitive church and by the Hutterites

It became apparent that nothing was being gained by having them in our homes. And yet, with his injured knee, what could they do? Where could they go?

It was decided to rent them a house in town and buy their groceries until he got his cast off. During this period of several months he became increasingly vocal in his views of apostolic socialism, openly and bluntly criticizing preacher and lay member alike who didn't share his views.

Different brethren got together with the man one day to try and make a few plans. At the end of this little session, one of the brethren got up to leave, and said, "Well, I need to go home and get to work."

"Ya," the man said, "you want to go home and work for yourself."

That was more than Paulo David could take. He was on his feet in a flash and set the record straight. "No! He is not going home to work for himself. He is going home to work for you, to help pay for your rent, for your groceries, for your medical expenses..."

The final chapter to this story came some three months after their arrival, when early one morning Paulo David took them to the bus station to catch the bus for Paraguay, where supposedly a group of Mennonites were offering them what we didn't.

Are there any lessons to be learned from all this? Yes. First of all, we as a Colony have matured. Contrary to what has happened in the past in situations like this, we came through this episode united. There was little or no accusing or defending.

I suppose it could be said that that family made fools of us. They took us for a ride. Then comes the question: Can't we avoid situations like this?

Yes we can. We can simply learn to say no to everyone and then no one will be able to make a fool of us.

But can we afford to take this approach? What about the sincere folks we will turn away? For Jesus to avoid having a Judas, he would have had to turn down eleven other apostles. And Judas treated Him worse than this fellow did us. Really, he didn't treat us bad at all.

To occasionally be made a fool is a small price to pay so that others can have a chance at salvation. It's a price we must be willing to pay. ▲

This Month on the Colony

Perdigão

They say opportunity knocks only once. Here in Rio Verde it is knocking again. If you will remember, in BN no. 37, we mentioned that a company called Sadia was thinking about coming into the area and setting up enormous broiler and hog raising projects. Well that all fell through.

Now Rio Verde is getting a another chance. Perdigão (second in national ranking, after Sadia) is planning on investing \$250 million dollars in a similar project. They have narrowed their options to two areas – Rio Verde and Patos de Minas.

Let's notice what is involved:

Investment – As mentioned, Perdigão will be investing 250 million dollars and local farmers another 100 million.

Daily production – When in full production, 280 thousand broilers and 3,600 hogs will be slaughtered daily.

Farmers involved – Approximately 2,000 farmers will be needed to meet their quotas.

Feed requirements – Local farmers would supply Perdigão with 340,000 metric tons of corn and 140,000 tons of soybean meal per year.

Local benefits – The municipality would receive 20 million a year in tax revenues. Three to five thousand direct jobs will be created and up to ten thousand indirect jobs.

Contrary to when Sadia was thinking of coming to Rio Verde, today a real community spirit is being shown. Civic leaders are working tirelessly in an effort to not let this opportunity slip through their fingers. They have had several meetings here on the Colony. Large meetings have been held in town with local farmers.

Very good interest was shown on the Colony. It must be remembered, though, that part of this interest is the simple fact that crops sold for local consumption will bring a better price than if shipped to São Paulo.

Seventy percent of Perdigão's production is exported. And 70 percent of this total goes to Japan, where the wings are a hot item for school lunches. The smaller bone is removed and then the meat pulled away from one end of the remaining bone, thus giving the wing the appearance of a sucker, which incidentally is what it is called by the school children. Fried, it is ready to be eaten.

In the meeting held on the Colony, Perdigão was very realistic. They said no one needs to expect to get rich working for them. Also, they said no one should expect that to be their only activity. To have to finance the entire operation also looks very bleak. They suggest no one finance more than 50 percent of the 40-50 thousand dollar cost of a barn.

What will happen if Perdigão decides to set up elsewhere? Will this be the last chance? Probably not. Because of Rio Verde's strategic location and high grain production, sooner or later something will be set up here. Sadia seems to be

reconsidering the area. Tyson Foods from the US are showing a keen interest in Brazil. Several other Brazilian companies are interested.

What are the chances of Perdigão choosing Rio Verde? Officially they are 50/50 percent.

S

Life in Brazil

The High-Tech Drug Pusher

We have written about morros – hills – in the city of Rio de Janeiro, where drug barons have their headquarters. Living in mansions, a stark contrast to the shacks in which their neighbors live, they are the “law” on these morros (see BN no. 38).

Recently the police invaded a morro in an attempt to arrest a dangerous drug pusher. Storming into his house, they turned everything upside down. But the man was not to be found anywhere.

Evidently the man had managed to escape undetected. But then the police got a high-tech break. A phone began to ring. And of all the places, it was coming from under a padded bench along one wall.

Mystified, the police checked out this strange occurrence – and found their man.

The padded bench was the cover to a small bricked in storage compartment along the wall, in which the drug pusher was hiding. Both chagrined and irritated, he surrendered to the police, all the while cursing his cellular phone which rang at the worst possible moment. Or, according to the police version, the best possible moment. ▲

When Crime Pays

Several weeks ago when we went into the pharmacy where we normally purchase our meds, a man was up on a ladder repairing a fairly large hole in the ceiling. One of the workers told us what had happened.

But first we must give a little explanation on the ceiling. It isn't uncommon for people to put in plaster of paris ceilings. Attractive, inexpensive and easy to be installed, they are hung from the rafters with fine wires. But, as can be imagined, these ceilings are very fragile.

One night four young boys decided to break into this pharmacy and raid the cash drawer. It was a fairly straight forward operation. In the cloak of darkness, they managed to climb up on the roof, where it was a simple matter of removing a dozen of the baked clay tile, the kind many of us have on our houses, kick a hole into the ceiling, crawl down the shelves on one wall, and break into the cash drawer.

What these boys didn't foresee was the burglar alarm that was installed in the establishment. When it went off, they tried to beat a hasty retreat. Several of them made

their escape good, but the other two were nabbed by a night watchman who came to investigate.

The American society has decreed that criminals, young or old, deserve five-star treatment. Brazilians also feel this way, which explains why criminals here frequently see stars. The two offenders nabbed by the night watchman soon saw enough stars to where they willingly squealed on their buddies who managed to get away. One was picked up in his home and the other the next day in the mall, where he was in the process of spending the money appropriated from the cash drawer.

This is the story my friend in the pharmacy told me the day after the break-in. The next time I went in he had another chapter to add:

“Since the police were able to recuperate some 200 reais of the money stolen (approximately half), they called me to come and get it. I sat down at the delegado’s (sheriff’s) desk and we talked a bit. He reached over to pick up the little sack in which the money was kept, but it wasn’t there.

“He looked around, but no where was the money to be found. He called his aids, but no one could help him out. Until suddenly it dawned on them what had happened. The stolen money had been stolen again – right from under their noses.

“It happens that the police were trying to rehabilitate a 13 year old street urchin who spent his time stealing. Apparently he was expected to spend some time at police headquarters where they could keep an eye on him.

“Seeing the money on the delegado’s desk, he swiped it and calmly walked out to the street where he bought some apples from a vendor. These he took to the adjoining jail and gave them to some of his buddies who weren’t as fortunate as he. Then he disappeared and hasn’t been seen since.”

Of one thing we can be quite sure. When he is finally caught, he will be given five-star treatment.

This & That

Here are some new phone numbers:

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Chris Stoltzfus | 613 9200 |
| Bert Coblentz | 613 9197 |
| Walt Redger | 613 9202 |

Remember, to call this way from N America, you must dial 011 55 62 plus the last seven digits of the number.

The Myron Kramer family spent the weekend of March 3 visiting the Pirenópolis mission.

John & Joan Unruh picked up their relatives, Douglas & Wilma Unruh, who are here to visit them, at the airport and then spent the night at Pirenópolis.

On March 8 the Monte Alegre youth got together at Paul Yoders to assemble tract packets, which were distributed in Rio Verde the following Saturday.

Jeff Koehn from Wisconsin is visiting his Aunt Ileen Koehn's family – and others, of course.

Kendra Schultz, Stan & Mary's daughter, is working at Bethel Home.

The Bert Coblentz family, together with daughter Barb, who is visiting here, paid the Leo Dirks family in Mato Grosso a visit.

Elias Stoltzfus went to Annual Meeting and then to Ohio to finish the revival effort.

Enos & Clara Miller are back in Brazil after spending some time in Tennessee.

Stephen & Dete Kramer had a little girl, Deborah Ellen, on March 21. They got their daughter off to a right start by giving her a name that can easily be pronounced in both Portuguese and English. I feel sorry for some children we have around here.

The Glenn Hibner family is spending a few days on their farm in Mato Grosso. Or maybe a few weeks.

Keleda Loewen is giving kindergarten classes to three students at the Monte Alegre School. Rio Verdinho School is sending their one student to Monte Alegre.

I can't believe it. Not a soul wrote me an anonymous note, nor collared me in church, to point out the error in the Economy section of the last BN, where it says that "Brazil ranks eighth on a work scale." It should be "on a world scale." Laurence Kramer, age 15, caught the mistake in the Wildlife in Brazil column, paragraph 3, where it says the tusks on a "wild pig's lower jaw are kept razor sharp . . ."

Paulo Rufino Faustino, the young doctor from Patos, Paraíba spent 10 days on the Colony.

Our Plans

We are planning on being in the States from May 25 to July 10. Obviously we will want to see as many of you good readers as possible, so here's our tentative schedule:

May 25 – 30 in Kentucky

May 31 – June 10 in Kansas

June 11 – 21 in California

June 22 – July 10 in Kansas, with little excursions to here and there. ▲