

Brazil News



No. 60
May 1996

Editorial

The Earring

Most religions accept jewelry, so we don't think it strange when a woman wears earrings. But with men it's different – at least for me. It may be because I was born in the first half of this century, or maybe because I have a narrow mind, but folks, when I see a man with an earring, I write him off.

At work the other day my wife told me there was a man up front wanting to see me. We met, and even as we were shaking hands, I noticed the tiny diamond studded earring in his left ear. I wrote him off, which, of course, doesn't preclude being civil.

He said his name was Wagner, that he worked for a company called MBM, and would like to talk to me about digital duplicators. It happened this was a subject I wanted very much to know more about, so I invited him into our publication room and we sat down to talk. Although I really didn't see how anything good could come out of a talk with a man who wore a diamond studded earring in his left ear.

I gave Wagner a brief rundown of the publication aspect of our work, how that we were outgrowing our high speed Xerox copier, but were not to the place where it was practical to go to offset printing. I also mentioned the fact that BN is published on a digital duplicator in the US.

Very courteous, he listened carefully to everything I told him. He spoke highly of the Xerox copier we were using. I found out that he had worked for Xerox for a number of years. He had a fabulous knowledge of all their products and soon we were deep into a nostalgic discussion about other copiers we both have used in the past – the old "7000" – discussing how many copies could be gotten off of one cylinder (a million), etc. etc. I hardly noticed his earring.

The demonstration of his machine was a success. I called my board and some of the

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members came over to the literature center to see how the machine worked. However, instead of discussing his product, the first thing we knew, we were deep into a discussion on what was uppermost in our mind – printing books, the cost of materials, types of binding, and all that goes with it. Since he operates his own print shop in Goiânia, he could immediately quote us prices on anything and everything. The man was a genius – in spite of his diamond earring.

It soon became apparent that Wagner wasn't going to push his product on us. If we were interested, he would tell us all about it. If not, we would shake hands again and he would be on his way. We would still be friends, even if he wore an earring.

When we got around to talking price, he explained that the government had agreed to knock off certain import taxes for school and religious organizations. We would qualify for this program. It was decided to have a meeting with Wagner that evening.

With the entire board present, the evening meeting started out on the same note as our first visit. He was pumped for information on different aspects of the book publishing process. Once again he seemed more than happy to share his knowledge with us. No one seemed to notice his diamond earring as we sat around the conference table talking.

We told Wagner we would consider his offer on the digital duplicator and give him an answer.

We can learn a profound lesson from Wagner and his diamond earring.

Those of us who were born and raised in Holdeman homes don't see anything strange about ourselves. Yes, we know we're different than most people, but we know why and that takes the strangeness out of it. But the truth of the matter is that to most people we are strange, because they don't know why we're different. They see us with the same reserve that I have (had?) for a man with an earring. Very likely most of them write us off.

Let's assume for the rest of this article that it's true that most people unconsciously write us off after one glance. It doesn't mean they won't be civil, or that they won't occasionally ask us some questions, or even that they won't try and be our friends. What writing us off means is that they wouldn't consider being like we any more than we men would consider wearing a diamond ring in our ear. We are talking in general terms. There are exceptions.

Wagner came to the literature center and I wrote him off. Yet today we are good friends. How did he manage that one? Let's notice:

He took the initiative to look us up and to tell us that he had a product for sale in which we might be interested. He even brought along a demonstrator model so that we could see first hand what he was talking about.

He listened to what we had to say and found we had a need. Instead of pointing out the deficiencies of our shop, he noticed what we were doing right and then showed us how we could improve even more.

He was prepared to help us. He was prepared because he prepared himself. Those of

us who were with him soon saw we were dealing with much more than a salesman. We were dealing with a man of vast knowledge who could help us solve different problems we were facing.

He had a product and was able to show us that it would fit our needs. He told us of others who were using digital duplicators, including the University of São Paulo, for making small initial runs of books, just like we were wanting to do.

Now for the lesson.

Initiative. How often don't we do just the opposite of what Wagner did? We feel that if people are really sincere, God will lead them to us. That occasionally happens. But how many people don't live with a need and die with a need because no one had the initiative to make the first move?

Listening. All too often we see witnessing as a monologue – in which we must do all the talking. We feel we must be able to present the whole plan of salvation much like a preacher would in a message. All wrong. Witnessing is, above all, the art of listening. He who listens well will soon have something to tell. Witnessing should be a dialogue between the “buyer” and the “seller.”

Preparation. It is difficult to speak intelligently about something we haven't experienced. In fact, we can't even listen intelligently without experience. Study, Bible reading and prayer are an important part of preparation, but they don't take the place of experience. Wagner has his own print shop, his own experience, which is one of the reasons he is able to communicate easily with his customers.

The product. Wagner wasn't embarrassed about his product. He was sure it would fit our needs. He offered to show it to us. When people ask us about our religion, all too often we begin by criticizing their religion, or feel we should lift out some of the main doctrines of ours. There is a time to talk about doctrines, but why not first of all talk about practical benefits? Why not tell about the inner peace we feel? Why not tell about our family life? Why not tell how it prepares us to face life in a difficult world? (And how it prepares us to face death?) Why not tell how it helps us avoid the many plagues that today are swallowing up so much of humanity? That's what people want to know. They want to know what will happen if they “buy” our product.

When Wagner showed up at work with that diamond studded ring in his left ear, his chances of making a sale were mighty slim. But by knowing how to approach us, we took our eyes off of the earring and began seeing the man – a man who had exactly what we needed.

We must get over the idea that if people are sincere, they will be inexorably drawn to us. We must take the initiative. Jesus and His disciples took the initiative. The apostle Paul took the initiative. The martyr brethren took the initiative. Why shouldn't we? We must realize that unless we take the initiative, all that people will remember about us is the “earring” we wear in our left ear. They won't show any interest in our product.

My board voted unanimously to buy a digital duplicator from Wagner.



Life in Brazil

Kidnapper Turned Negotiator

In BN no. 54, we ended an article about Leonardo Pareja by saying we suspected that he would be making more news. Well he has.

For the benefit of those who don't remember the story, Pareja, as he is known here, is an intelligent, good looking young man of 22, who decided early in life that the easiest way to attain his two goals—fame and a life of luxury—would be through crime.

Pareja made national headlines by kidnapping a young girl in the state of Bahia and then releasing her, unharmed, after eluding his pursuers.

Pareja's greatest pleasure is taunting the police. To say the least, this isn't a healthy pastime. When he did finally surrender, it wasn't to the police, but to a judge in the presence of a well known TV journalist and several of his lawyers.

He has spent the last six months in Cempaigo, an agricultural penitentiary in Goiânia, serving time on his nine year sentence.

On March 28, a delegation of judges, which included the president of the judicial system of the state of Goiás, and other officials, entered Cempaigo on an official visit to check out prison conditions. Protected only by guards carrying clubs, Limongi, the Cempaigo director was surprised to find that for some reason the prisoners in pavilion B weren't locked in their cells.

In a matter of moments the guards were overpowered and they, together with the visitors, were all hostages. It's still unclear to what extent this was planned, or if it was a situation that just fell into the prisoner's laps. Whatever it was, Pareja wasn't involved at this point. Locked in a cell in another pavilion, he was released by the prisoners several hours later.

With his natural charm and above average education for a criminal, in a short time he emerged as the chief negotiator. This he did with his normal flamboyance, taking time off to play soccer in the prison yard, to play his guitar, and of course to pose, shirtless, up on the prison wall for TV cameras.

Pareja's performance was enhanced by the fact that the outside negotiating team was inexperienced and repeatedly played into his hands. The eight get-away cars were of the brand and model he demanded. He also stipulated the type of weapons, the ammunition and the amount of cash to be taken. There would be a hostage in most of the cars and the police would give them ten hours of grace before giving chase. During this time the hostages were to be released.

Six days and seven hours after the delegation was taken hostage, all but six of the hostages had been released. These six were in the procession of eight cars that left the prison. Pareja chose a law student, the son of the president of the state judicial system, as his hostage. One of his first stops was at a local bar where he ordered drinks for himself and his hostage, and then, to the delight of the customers, paid for a round of drinks for everyone, and told the owner to keep the change of the 50 real bill. After another stop or two, they left town headed for the state of Tocantins.

When they ran into their first roadblock, the law student, now under Pareja's charm, had a unique solution. "Hold your revolver to my head and they'll let us through." He did and it worked. But Pareja knew this was but the first of a series of road blocks and that his little game was up. So at the next one he surrendered to the police, but demanded the presence of several judges to make his surrender "official." The police now shout victory, saying he surrendered to them, but Pareja insists he surrendered to the judges.

The president of the judiciary system was rescued when the car in which he was riding ran into an armored vehicle. The only fatal victim in this entire story was a girl hit by a stray bullet during a shoot-out between the police and the bandits. None of the hostages were harmed. Well over half of the prisoners have been recaptured.

All this has an interesting little political sideline. The governor of the state of Goiás and the president of the judiciary are archenemies. Their variances constantly make headlines. Imagine the awkward situation the governor found himself in, with his antagonist held hostage, and he personally responsible for negotiations to get him released.

In a cartoonist's version of the dilemma, a negotiator came to the governor and gave him the latest demands being made by the prisoners. The governor asks, "And what will happen if I don't go along with their demands?" The man replies, "They will release the president of the court." The governor yells, "Give them everything they are asking for."

That's the light side. On the serious side, the president of the judiciary is praising Pareja to high heaven, saying that if it wasn't for his skillful arbitration, there would have been bloodshed, implying that the governor was inept. The governor says that criminals are culls and that Pareja is a criminal—not a hero.

Obviously, in the eyes of some Pareja is hero. Yet he is in a difficult situation. In yet another display of conceit, he has asked for a transfer from Cebaigo to a better prison. The reason? The prisoners in Cebaigo are low class. He doesn't want to have anything to do with them. They are aware of his attitude. Perhaps it would be better if he didn't go back there.

We can quite safely say at this point that Pareja will be making more news. ▲

School

Our Field Trip

These reports, written by RioVerdinho School students, are unedited. Notice the Portuguese terminology that creeps in. The Monte Alegre School students were included too. One little hint: Gráfica means print shop.

Grace Kramer — This year the seventh and eighth graders went to Goiânia.

Dustin Schultz — Wednesday, March 28, 1996 I went on my big field trip. I had to get up at 3:40 in the morning. After I was ready my mom took me to school.

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Karen Ferrell — I woke up 10 min. before 4:00 am then I got myself ready and Amy came and picked me up. We went to Deke's house then to João Souto's place to wait for the bus. The bus got a little bit late but then the bus came.

Kenyon Kramer – I woke up in the morning at a little after three, on March 27. It was Wednesday, the day of our field trip.

Yvonne Martin – We left on our 7th and 8th grade field trip at more or less 5:20 a.m. Our bus was a green, yellow, and white Nacional Expresso. It was really nice; almost like a plane but there was no air conditioning. Our bus driver was a short little man, but he really knew his stuff. His name was Norival.

Kenyon – When we got to João Soutos, the bus had not arrived yet. When it arrived we got on. It was a Volvo Nacional Expresso, and the man did not know Goiânia. It was completely dark. We left João Soutos at about 5:30 am. It got light somewhere between town and the Rio Verdão.

Dustin – On the way to Goiânia we talked, rested, and looked for the stuff on our Passport to Adventures.

Yvonne – The trip to Goiânia was fun. We all had fun marking off the “For You To Do” in our “passport.” There was also a place for our fellow tourists to sign. We all had cinamon rolls and café com leite for breakfast.

Grace – We had breakfast in the bus about 7:00 and we got into Goiânia about 8:50.

Kenyon – First we went to Gráfica Cerne. We had to ask directions a couple of times, but we didn't have much trouble finding the place.

Yvonne – We got to Cerne around 9:15 a.m. Cerne is a large government printery, TV station and radio station. There are beautiful gardens around all the buildings.

Grace – A lady named Katarina met us and took us inside where another lady went with us who did the explaining. First they took us to the presidents office. His name was Vanderlei Guimarães. He said the Cerne had been working for 46 years. He is responsible to decide what work will be done in the gráfica.

Karen – They first had to read their copy, summarize it, and sometimes the copy machines made mistakes, so they had to make sure it was spealed correct. We saw how they cut papers and how machines could print. There were lot of machines that could print letters in lead and people who work there die younger because lead isn't very good for your body.

Yvonne – Then we went to the Sala de Arte Final where our lady guide worked. There they put the articles on the page the way they want them. Off to the side there was a proofreading room. They proofread everything 2-3 times. 90% of the time the work is correct.

Kenyon – We went to a room where a black round thing let you out in another room. In that room there was a large camera with lights. We went back and watched him put a chapa under the ultraviolet rays. They put it through a machine with rollers that does something with different chemicals.

Yvonne – After that we went to the Oficina Gráfica where they printed. They had several off-set machines. Some were big enough to print a whole sheet of paper.

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They also had old type-set machines. They had to have type to stamp the paper. The machine's brand was Original Heidelberg. They still use these machines because they are cheaper.

This place makes its own type. There were about 4 machines with molten lead making type. This was very interesting.

Although this method is cheap, it is also dangerous. The people who make the type die young because they get a build-up of lead in their bodies.

Kenyon — We went down to a large lower room that was full of equipment. In the back was a couple of lino machines. The people that use them will die sooner because of messing with lead. One of the men typed Daniel Holdeman's name. Toward the front there was a paper cutting machine and it only worked when both of his hands punched some buttons. This was so they don't get their hand cut off. They were cutting and putting in stacks, some medicine labels.

Yvonne — We saw several huge paper cutters. Some of them had electric eyes so that no one could get their hands chopped off.

Dustin — Then the guide led us a room with about 13 different printing machines. After they copy it they put it through a machine. Now it's ready to buy.

Yvonne — Next, we went to the television section. We saw first the place where Nilton, our guide, worked. It was a small room with walls all padded and floors and ceiling and even the door carpeted. It was really sophisticated.

Grace — Next a man took us over to the television broadcasting building. He showed us how they make reports on television. They served us coffee and then gave us books explaining and listing everything that goes on at Cerne.

Yvonne — We also visited a studio where the news reporters report on television. We found out that they don't have anything memorized, they read it off of a screen.

Finally it was time to leave. We sang O Povo do Senhor and O Beautiful Star to them (our guides). Then we all shook hands and thanked them. I was impressed how friendly everyone was there.

Kenyon — The bus was there waiting and we went to the Walmor restaurant, and ate dinner there. My plate weighed over 700 grams [1.5 lbs of food]. The meat was very good. For drink we had some Pepsi. After that we each had an icecream bar.

Dustin — Next we went to the airport. There was a Tam Fokker 100 there. They were gonna let us tour it but they were cleaning it so we couldn't.

Next we went to the zoo. First we saw some crazy monkeys. Next we saw big alligators, turtles, a huge lion, snakes, tigers, onças and many other animals. I liked the tigers most.

Kenyon — When we got there we went through the turnpike. The first thing we saw were the monkeys.

Karen — We saw Baboons, Spider monkeys jumping around, Macaco preto that had babies on their backs, and, some were making little jumps and funny things. We walked around and saw some antas, capivaras, alligators, and about 50 kinds of interesting birds.

Yvonne — Last of all we saw the hippos. There was a male, a female and a baby. They were eating. Each time they chewed, you see their tusks.

Just when we got to the bus, it started raining. I call that lucky that we didn't get caught!

Grace — We left the zoo about 3:30 and headed for the mall. At the mall we headed right to McDonalds on the third floor. Some went by escalater and some by elevator. It took a long time to order and decide what I wanted. I got a McChicken, french fries, and a large glass of Coke for \$4.85. I was full when I got done. We left Goiânia about 4:30. We had a nice ride home, sing, rapid calcs, and "Who am I?"

We had a very good bus. It was a National Expresso. Our driver was very polite and nice. He signed our Passports. He was always on time when we were ready to board. We sang some portuguese songs for him on the way home.

Yvonne – We were sad when we saw the lights of Rio Verde. It was such a super day! ▲

Zigzagging Around

Another Salesman

A Peruvian, he is the head of the sales department at Xerox for the state of Goiás. He called several days ago and asked if he could pay us a visit at work.

My first curiosity was to know what his Portuguese sounded like. I have mentioned before that Spanish speaking people from other Latin American countries seldom learn to speak Portuguese, even if they live here most of their lives. They speak Spaniguese.

Hector is different. He speaks fluent Portuguese, with but a slight accent, even though he has lived in Brazil for only 8 years. Obviously he speaks fluent Spanish, this being his mother tongue. He speaks fluent Russian and good English. In fact, he plans on spending some time in the States right directly to perfect his English.

I suspect he has some knowledge of other languages. When introducing him to one of my board members, I said something about not knowing if he spoke German. Just that quick he said—in German—"I don't speak German." I wonder if he doesn't.

Where did he learn his Russian? At 17 he moved to the Ukraine, where he lived for the next seven years, getting his degree in computer sciences.

During our conversation he commented, "It was ten years ago today that the nuclear reactor at Chernobyl blew up." He went on to explain that he and his wife, a physician, were living in Kiev, which is only a hundred kilometers from where the accident occurred.

Accident victims began arriving in the hospital where his wife was working, but no one would say what had happened. Finally it was rumored that an atomic bomb had exploded someplace. It wasn't until three days later, when high levels of radiation were picked up in Switzerland, I believe, and someone blew the whistle, that they finally found out what was going on.

I told Hector it didn't really make sense that someone who got his education in the U.S.S.R would be working in a multinational firm like Xerox. He laughed, "It happens I didn't go to Russia for political motives."

When Hector goes to the US, I'll try to get his address and publish it. He is a person you readers would enjoy learning to know. ▲

No Tornadoes...

I have told the little anecdote before about the Brazilian version of creation. When the Almighty was working on what is now Brazil, one of the angels is supposed to have asked, "But Lord, I don't understand, why is it that this country won't have any earthquakes, tornadoes, blizzards or hurricanes?" The Lord is to have chuckled and said, "But just you wait and see what kind of politicians they'll have over there."

Interestingly, as our political scene is taking a turn for the better, our weather seems to be taking a turn for the worse, which would be in keeping with the logic of the little witticism.

A gradual change in our weather pattern seems to be taking place. It used to be that our rivers would overflow their banks at least twice each rainy season. Down at the falls on the Monte Alegre River where Kramers have their hydroelectric plant, this meant watching the river and hoisting the generator up when the water level got too high. I don't think they have had to do this for the last several years.

One theory is that better soil conservation is keeping more run-off out of the river. I don't doubt that there is truth to this, but yet something doesn't add up. In that case our hand dug wells (most of them in retirement) should have especially high water levels. But they don't.

Our rainy season begins in September or October, but the water level in these wells bottoms out approximately at the end of December. Sometime in February or March the water level is back up to normal. It seems like each year the level is coming up less.

Another change we are noticing over the years are our wind storms which are becoming increasingly violent.

Recently a freak straight wind hit the Dean Mininger farm. It tumbled his springtooth for some hundred yards, breaking off a fruit tree in the orchard and piling it into another. It takes some real blast to move a springtooth. The same wind began caving in one end of his metal structure shed.

One explanation for this, of course, is the fact that when we moved here, less than 10% of the woods were cleared. Today I doubt if much more than 10% remain. Also, back those days most farmsteads were down near the streams. Now—especially on the Colony—most of the farmsteads are up on top where there is virtually no protection from the winds.

The government is becoming quite alarmed by what is happening. A law has been passed requiring that over the next 30 years farmers revert 20% of the area of their

farms to native trees. Those who still have woods, must set aside 20% of their place for this. I haven't seen a single farmer who is jumping up and down about this one—at least not with a smile on his face.

A lot of farmers are betting that everything blow over. They may be right. Literally.

The Swanee River

Visitors from N America do a double take in our church services when the song leader gets up and announces a number out of our Portuguese hymnal and then begins leading The Swanee River, or maybe The Little Church in the Wildwood, or even, Juanita.

The fact that these are beautiful childhood songs hardly qualifies them for use in our church services. So before some disgruntled visitor begins spreading the word that we're getting rather worldly in our singing here in Brazil, I hasten to explain that the words are Christian, most appropriate for church services. Song writers have simply appropriated the tunes, and come up with quite a pleasant effect.

Brazilians can become very good singers. They don't have the natural melodiousness of the Mexican. In fact, when Brazilians sing their National Anthem, one gets the impression that an invasion is taking place.

But when exposed to the church environment, Brazilians rapidly pick up the rudiments of music. This is especially true of those who study in our schools.

At present most of our church singing is done out of a Baptist hymnal. We are dreaming of the day when we will be able to select hymns out of different hymnals and compile our own hymnal in shaped notes. Carman Loewen is working toward this, but as can be imagined, this is an immense job that won't get done overnight.

Brazilians visiting our services are overwhelmed by the singing. To have four voice harmony without musical accompaniment is almost unbelievable.

Singing has proved to be a powerful witness in this country. Our church schools here put a lot of emphasis on singing, something which has, and will, pay rich dividends. Often a song will unlock doors nothing else can.

So folks, when you pay us a visit here in Brazil and we begin singing Home on the Range in church, don't be astounded. ▲

Reader's Write

The Northeast

You'll remember the article about the illiterate mayor from the town of Quixaba. Sam Coblentz, our missionary in the Northeast, makes a few observations on that article. The Quixaba he talks about isn't the same one mentioned in the VEJA article.

There's a little burg over the knoll and around the corner from us here that is called Quixaba da Paraíba. I'm told that if you want to make someone feel like a heel, ask him if he is from Quixaba.

The other was: Exactly What do you know about cuzcuz? And how does it resemble a tamale? Maybe you should take a little trip to Quixaba da Paraíba. You could spend several nights with us and get someone to show you what cuzcuz is. In the meantime I can tell you it is more like cornbread...

Sam's invitation is great. What isn't great is the airfare to the Northeast—nearly \$500. A Goiânia/Miami/Goiânia ticket costs \$699. It's a big three-day trip, one way, on bad roads to drive. One can go by bus, but it would be a good idea to stock up on the kind of tea Adrianna talked about in her report in the last issue of BN. Hey Sam, how about sending me a package of cuzcuz the first chance you get? ▲

Mexico

Stuart Isaac, who I assume is a mis-sionary in Mexico, sent me the following letter:

In BN no. 57, there was an article under "Thinking Out Loud" about natives. I thoroughly enjoyed the article and am in perfect harmony with the thought you tried to convey that we are all equals and we need to be careful not to imply anything that would make others feel we are not. At the same time, I am rather surprised that you do not seem to know that there are also people who consider it a real privilege to be called a native. In Canada there is a movement called First Nations that has been gaining popularity now for quite a number of years. These people are proud to be called natives because they arrived in North America many years before the white man did. They are the Indians. To be native brings them quite a bit more prestige than just being a Canadian. If they are natives they are entitled to big government cheques, free houses, schooling and more. There are many people seeking to prove now that they are natives so they can also come into this bracket and are hurt if they are not called natives. We are living in Mexico now and I have at different times wished I could just be classed as a native instead of hearing the derisive shout from across the street, "Americano!" If only I were a native I would not have to spend so much time and money working on permits to be here. Do we sometimes think people are implying more with the word native than they actually are? We have observed that when people from the States visit Brazil, it is put into the BN which state they came from. When people from Canada visit they are just put down as coming from Canada even though Canada has 10 Provinces, two Territories and covers a much larger land area than the US. I suppose if we were sensitive we could think that the editor implies that all Canadians come from a dumpy little country. All the same I appreciate your articles. Keep up the good work!

Oh me oh my. And to think that I considered myself quite well informed because: 1) I am aware that states in Canada are called provinces and not providences, 2) I dutifully say N America and not merely US, as some US'ers undiplomatically do when describing

a situation or event that could possibly involve both Canada and the US, 3) I have some mighty good friends (even relatives) living in Canada—and I must include the Warkentins and others from the province of MANITOBA who live here in Brazil.

Nope, the editor of BN doesn't consider Canada to be a dumpy little joint. He's hoping to visit this huge country some day. In fact, after listening to what Stuart has to say, he would even like to become a native there and live in their providence. ▲

For Children Only

The Test

Usually we know it when we're taking a test. Our teacher says, "OK students, put your books away and get out a clean sheet of paper." Or maybe we are given a sheet of paper with a number of questions on it that we're to answer.

That's one kind of test. But there is another kind of test. This is the test we take without even knowing it. And it's this kind of a test that tells what kind of a person we really are.

Here's a little story about a boy named Marcos who took this kind of test.

Marcos is 14 years old. When his folks moved to town, he decided to look around for work. Sometimes finding a job is harder work than the job itself.

So there was Marcos walking the streets, going into store after store, looking for work. Finally things clicked. He walked into a hardware store where a lot of Mennonites buy. Nilton, the owner, could use an errand boy, so he decided to hire Marcos.

Marcos told his dad that he found work at Ferragista J.E. Dad was glad that he would be working at a place with a good reputation. Even so, he did go pay the owner a visit. He explained that in our religion there are certain things we don't do. He gave the owner an example: "Let's say my boy answers the phone and the person at the other end of the line says, 'This is Maurício da Silva speaking, I'd like to talk to Nilton please.' So he goes to call you and you say, 'Tell him I just left.' Marcos won't obey that order, because it would mean telling a lie."

Nilton remembered that and after Marcos had worked there for a while, decided to put him to the test. Only in a different way.

Marcos was unrolling wire from a large roll and making smaller half kilo (500 gram) rolls that could be sold to the customers more easily.

Nilton told one of his other workers to weigh the rolls Marcos had made up to see if they actually weighed half a kilo. Each roll he weighed was right on.

But there was more to the test. When Marcos got to the end of the roll, there wasn't enough left to make a complete roll. He told Nilton that there were only 300 grams left. So now what?

Nilton had an idea. When Marcos was out of earshot, he whispered to the other worker, "Let's try this boy out. Try and get him to put a half kilo sticker on the roll of wire, even if it's 200 grams short. Tell him that's how we do it."

What happened next went something like this:

Worker—Marcos, how much wire do you have left there?

Marcos—Three hundred grams.

Worker—I'll tell you what, Marcos, just go ahead and put a 500 gram sticker on it.

Marcos—I can't do that.

Worker—Why not?

Marcos—It would be dishonest.

Worker—No Marcos, you don't understand. There's nothing dishonest about that.

The customer probably won't even notice this roll is slightly underweight.

Marcos—Even so I can't do it.

Worker—Here, let's ask the boss if it's OK. Hey Nilton, come here. Is it OK if

Marcos puts a 500 gram sticker on this wire that weighs only 300 grams?

Nilton—Ya, it's OK. Go ahead Marcos. In business we do stuff like this all the time.

Worker—See, it's OK. Go ahead Marcos.

Marcos—If it's OK, then go ahead and do it yourself.

After Nilton finishes telling this story, he bursts out laughing. "That boy is sure enough honest." To him it is sort of a joke, and yet down deep it probably has been a strong reproof. He realizes that in his store the errand boy is more honest than the boss.

And now, what grade would you say Marcos got on this test? ▲

Agriculture

Harvest Results

Farmers live for harvest—simply because they can't live without it. A good harvest can have a powerful influence on a farmer's personality. So can a poor harvest. Anyway, there are a lot of pleasant farmers on the American Colony in Brazil.

Generally speaking, crops did well this year. A few had below average yields and a few had above average results. According to information I picked up, the average corn yield on the Colony was somewhat over 120 bushels an acre, and soybeans approximately 45 bushels an acre.

The price is better than it has been for a number of years. Corn is selling for around \$2.85 a bushel and soybeans for \$6.00 a bushel.

It should be pointed out that this is the price farmers get after a 15% production tax deduction. It sounds like a lot, but our income tax is set up in such a way that a farmer seldom has to pay any. So the amount we quoted is net, actual spendable money.

Several of the farmers experimented with milo as a first crop. Normally milo is planted as a second crop after harvesting corn or soybeans. I understand that the net profit may have been slightly less than if corn had been planted. But on the positive side, it costs far less to put out an acre of milo than an acre of corn or soybeans. So, depending on the farmer's financial situation at planting time, by going the milo route it may be possible to avoid getting a bank loan, which in the long run may make it a better deal than corn or soybeans.

SLC—John Deere

Not too long after the Colony was started here in Brazil, a sugar plantation was discovered in the state of São Paulo that had a bunch of retired 830 John Deere tractors for sale. I think the idea was to buy two and use one for parts. So for a few years we had a limited amount of popping on the Colony. But in the long run it didn't prove practical to import parts for the old clunkers.

Another attempt was made to get John Deeres on the market. This time a number of businessmen went together and started an assembly plant for John Deere tractors manufactured in China. I think this venture turned out to be a total disaster. They were the cruddiest tractors I have ever seen in my life. So far as I know, the place shut down.

But now, folks, it's for real. Finally the Holdeman farmers in Brazil will be able to raise the green and yellow flag and feel they are truly equal with their N American counterparts.

SLC, a national farm machinery manufacturer, and John Deere have launched a joint venture in which John Deere tractors will be sold under the name of SLC – John Deere.

The salesman on the Colony is Luiz Duarte, whom some of you know. He told me today that the models to be sold initially are the 6300 (100 h.p.), the 6600 (121 h.p.) and the 7500 (140 h.p.). I don't know if these model numbers mean anything in N America. I can guarantee you that they do here. Luiz says he already has six orders signed.

As is often the case in modern industry, these tractors are built in different locations. In this case the transmissions come from Germany, the motor from Argentina, the main frame from the US, and the rest supposedly is produced in Brazil.

I don't know anything about tractors, but people who do around here seem quite impressed. By the end of next month there should be a few more statistics to throw around.

At the present, what kind of tractors predominate on the Colony? Ford and Massey Ferguson. Both are built in Brazil and are quality products, although they don't have near the bells and whistles that John Deere has. There are also a number of Valmet tractors. If people don't make money farming in Brazil, it's not because of a lack of tractors.

This & That

Some of the Loewens were in São Paulo and went to Wal-Mart. They were impressed. It has a lot of imported merchandise, the prices are good, and yes, it even smells like its N American counterpart.

On March 26, electricity went off on the Colony. Since work in the literature center soon comes to a halt without electricity, Faith and I decided to quickly run to town and do our business. But town was out of electricity too. We found out it was a general blackout including a number of states. I was amazed at how much of town was shut down too. Not much works anymore without electricity.

When others doubt ones sanity, that is part of life. But when we ourselves wonder what's going on, that's another story. You remember the little incident when one of the Beckers annointed the automatic clothes washer belt with cockroach spray. Next was his daughter, who told her doctor she was using the same stuff to enhance her complexion. Now the latest one. The youngest Becker, age 12, decided to surprise his folks and have supper all ready when they got home from work. Since the potatoes weren't going through the french fry cutter right, he got out a pressurized spray can of oil – yep, the kind you use on squeaky door hinges and rusty bolts – and lubricated the machine. It definitely altered their taste. And talk about french fries going down like greased lightning . . .

My phone rang in the office. I answered and at the other end of the line someone was also answering. We recognized each other's voices and both asked, "Did you call me?" It was Getúlio from Fast Turismo, a tourist agency in Goiânia where some of us buy our tickets. Both of our phones rang simultaneously, without either of us dialing the other. The interesting thing will be seeing who gets the bill.

We received our Risograph digital duplicator on April 16. Another landmark day in our literature program.

On the day of the field trip to Goiânia for the 7th and 8th graders, the rest of the students had a picnic lunch at the dam near Earl Schmidts and then on to the Rio Verdinho School to play games.

Sherwin & Gladys Friesen and children from St. Mary's, ONTARIO, Canada, were here for a short visit.

Jonathan Coblentz & Sheila Rosa got married on the 10th of March in the Monte Alegre Congregation. I missed this event on the list of items Faith gave me for this column. But since marriage is for life, for BN to be a month late isn't really going to change anything.

We published our 300th Mensageiro. The first one was printed in September of 84. We have year books for each year, complete with an index. Some of the readers save their copies and give them to us at the end of the year to be bound. This gives the brethren a wealth of literature.

Milton Loewen, whose little dairy supplies most of the Colony with milk, went to the state of São Paulo recently to buy several milk cows. On the way back, he and his wife Cindy paid the Mirassol mission a short visit.

The Stanley Schultz family, Regina Miller and Roxy Schultz spent several days visiting Paula Schultz and the missionaries at the Mirassol mission.

There will be a boy's preparatory class here in June with Greg Dyck as the instructor. I had the privilege of translating the text book used. In the future I want to write about why that was a privilege.

Valéria Gold, who has been in the US a couple of times and some of you know, is getting married on the second of June to Paulo Rufino, a young doctor from Patos, Paraíba.

On April 30 we had a general school meeting at the Rio Verdinho Congregation.

The issue was whether or not we should register our schools. It was an issue with a lot of pros and cons to it. Different brethren spent a lot of time investigating. The bottom line, however, was that it is illegal to operate our schools without registering. A very strong vote of support was given to register them. We are aware that this will involve more decisions as time goes on, and possibly problems, but these will have to be faced as they arise.

Clot and clout. The difference is one little tiny “u”. But because of the absence of that one little letter, I had four people pull me over in church (three at Monte Alegre and one in Rio Verdinho) to triumphantly inform me of this. Example: “Oh, I hope the mayor’s clot doesn’t reach his heart.” I agree that would be both serious and dangerous. U agree?

And here’s another one. I got a phone call at work from a lady who said she read in BN that the only thing a certain bank employee knew how to do was go crazy, so that is what he did. She thought it was hilarious and added that she hoped this malady wouldn’t afflict her too. I couldn’t figure out what she was talking about, so I did a little checking, and sure enough there it was in the article about the illiterate mayor (BN 59). 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. We sincerely hope not too many people have this talent.

The flour mill near Rio Verde burned down.

This is the 60th issue of BN. I would like to ask my publisher to check the mailing list and add three months to the subscription of anyone who has been receiving BN continuously from issue one.