

# Brazil News

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Editorial

## **Mission by Colonization**

One of the most fascinating aspects of the American Colony in Brazil is the mission project that has developed.

For those who haven't followed the founding and development of the Colony, a bit of history may be in order.

Approximately 25 years ago different families in N America were tossing the idea around about starting a settlement in S America. Several trips were made to investigate and Brazil was selected as the ideal spot for a colonization project.

It would be untrue to say that Rio Verde – Goiás was chosen as the site for the American Colony because of mission considerations. It wasn't. Actually, you might say the Lord chose the spot. The VW Kombi the brethren were traveling in was needing to spend a little time in the shop for a checkup. It happened that Rio Verde had a VW agency. Word soon got around that a whole Kombi load of bearded Americans were looking for land. A man by the name of Manoel Norberto Vilela heard what was going on. He had a tract of land for sale. The brethren looked at it. They liked it. And they bought it.

In 1969 the first families set up their tents on what is now the Colony.

Excellent relations were maintained with Manoel Norberto. When he found out that we were wanting to break up a small plot of ground, he immediately offered to send his tractor driver out with his tractor to do this work for us.

His tractor driver came and worked up the land. We occasionally saw him at Manoel's place. What we didn't know was that something was working in his heart. After a number of years he began to attend church. He became converted and was baptized. Today he is married to Edna Loewen's daughter, Charlene.

One day when I was at Enos Miller's place, an elderly man rode up on a horse. Sitting behind him was a young girl. The man, known as João Baiano, dismounted, as did the girl. Almost as if on a divine mission, he solemnly made a short speech. It

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went something like this: “I am your neighbor. You Americans have moved into this community and will need to learn Portuguese. This is my daughter Nita. I want her to learn English. So I am going to leave her with you. She will teach you Portuguese and you will teach her English.”

Nita lived with Enos Millers for several months and then went to live with Glenn Hibners. She got converted and became a member of the church. Today she is our daughter-in-law.

Luiz Duarte lived with his parents by the rickety old Rio Verdinho bridge. We appreciated his parents very much and would quite often stop there. They would invite us in for meals and at times it opened up to have a little service. They wanted to know if Luiz could study in our Colony school. It was agreed, providing someone would board him. John Penners offered their home. He soon quit school and finally drifted out of the community. He married but continued to roam. Finally, realizing there was no future in what he was doing, he came back to Rio Verde, got work on the Colony, got converted together with his wife. They recently spent some time in the mission in the Northeast. His mother got converted several months before she died. Quite a few of his relatives are also members of the church.

Cris Alves lived in the local orphanage. Turning 17 she had to find a different place to stay. She found a home on the Colony. She got converted, was baptized and today is living in Moundridge, Kansas and studying nursing in Hutchinson. Read her article on page 3.

This list could go on. The point is that while we were clearing fields, gathering brush, plowing, seeding and harvesting, souls were being saved. Actually, we could almost say that they fell into our lap.

Mission by colonization. Does it work?

Read on and decide.

I have painted a rosy picture about the positive side of mission by colonization. Now let's take a look at the thorns.

We have a real hybrid situation here on the Colony. I don't know of another place in the church where we have something similar. We have:

Two languages.

Two economical standards.

Two cultures.

Obviously this creates problems. There are those among us who feel that the Americans should pull out so that everything could get back to one language, one economical standard and one culture.

There are those who would like to have each do his own thing. There would be no open attempt at integration.

Some like it about the way it is.

And finally, some would like to see the American Colony become a Brazilian Colony.

May I hasten to assure the readers that while there is a lot of difference of opinion, it isn't a hot issue. Under the present setup, almost everyone is giving and taking – graciously.

I realize I am going to be peppered with, “But what do you think?”

Remember that what I say here doesn't necessarily reflect everyone else's views. The first thing to keep in mind is that we definitely do have a hybrid situation here. We have no place to look to and see how they do it. Without give and take we are up the creek. Personally, I am comfortable with the way things are working.

Even so, if I were to mention one thing that I feel could change and be to our advantage, it would be the general attitude toward Brazil and the Brazilian people. For someone from a first world country to settle in the third world is a real test of humility. It is entirely natural to unconsciously take on a superior air – and then stoop way over, look up, and say, “See, I'm on your level.”

This attitude has possibly done us more damage than anything else. And I don't think a single one of us can say we have never had any trouble with it. It just comes too natural.

Is mission by colonization a success? Yes. Yes indeed! In spite of the negative aspects that have been touched on, I consider it a beautiful way to do mission work.

To have established congregations here with a mission board to work together with the General Board from N America works well and saves a heap of money in travelling expenses.

To my good readers in Brazil, may I suggest that we do all we can to make our Colony work. Who knows, maybe someday we can give a few pointers to a new colony that is established in some other part of the world.

I can't help but believe that the Lord would be pleased with more projects of this nature. To start from scratch in a new area, and especially in a new country, isn't easy. But if souls are saved, it is worth it. ▲

## My Life

### **Cris Alves**

[This article is based on two essays written (in English) by Cris and a short interview.

The person she refers to as Tia (aunt) is actually the governess at the orphanage. Tia is a term of respect used by children in Brazil for their teachers or superiors. She refers to all the orphanage children as her brothers and sisters.]

It was Christmas and Saturday – so much work to do with tile floors and walls to be washed and waxed; so many children to get ready, washing their faces and dressing them.

Breakfast was served at six thirty. The ones who were late would have to go hungry until lunch. It had always been this way in our orphanage of 10 girls and 65 boys.

The boys wore their hair really short. It reminded me of soldiers doing their basic training in the army. When we were standing in line, no talking was allowed.

“What color of dress does Tia have on today?” asked my little brother with fright in his eyes.

“She has a brown dress on and you better watch out!” replied another. We always knew what kind of mood she was in by the color of dress she wore.

Just thinking about the kind of day we were facing made me want to cry.

By nine o'clock the orphanage had to be clean and spotless. I ran back one more time to check if I had missed any corners when cleaning.

At ten o'clock it was time to go to the sewing room where there were heaps of clothes to be mended. How I hated to mend! Sometimes when I had spent so much time on a dress and was so pleased with my work, Tia would come to see my job. Then she would get mad and pull my ear. She would say that I was in the orphanage because no one loved me. She would go on to say that I would never amount to anything.

I hated Tia from the bottom of my heart for saying things like that.

During this time I was around six years old. I say “around” because no one knows my actual age.

“It's time for you to start learning how to make pants for the boys. And you had better do a good job!” Tia told me.

I was trembling all over. I got the material and started to cut out the pants. We used another pair of pants as a pattern.

At four o'clock Tia showed up. She had to admit, “The pants look good.” She continued, “So tomorrow I expect you to get at least three more pairs done.”

For our Christmas celebration, they had us all line up and I wondered what I would get as a present. I wanted a doll, but instead I got a piece of material. That's how that Christmas went in the orphanage.

On mending days I would sometimes daydream. As I would sit at the sewing machine, I would see a farm with ducks, cows, birds, and lots of trees. In the house I would see a family. The mother would be a young lady who loved to have me as her daughter.

One time I caught myself scratching a drawing on the sewing cabinet with my needle. I tried to draw the house I was seeing in my mind. Tia came up unexpectedly and saw what I was drawing. She wanted to know what it meant. What I got out of that one was a real hard spanking and the privilege of sanding and revarnishing the cabinet.

I remember one Mother's Day. We had a party at school. You see, most of my brothers and sisters had parents who were too poor to take care of them. Each one of us had to make a little gift for our mother. I had made a gift too.

We sang songs. Then the teacher started calling names and the children would go to their mother, who had been invited, and give her a gift. She would thank them and give them a big hug.

At the end of the party, there I stood alone holding my gift. With all the excitement, she had forgotten that I didn't have a mother. She tried to console me.

That was when I began to wonder, who am I? How old am I? Do I have any family?

These are questions I will never find the answer to.

When I turned 11, I had a job to support myself. At the orphanage they charged for every item we used. Working from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and going to school in the evening kept me very tired and busy.

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I especially remember one day. I left for school with a very heavy feeling in my heart. I stopped at a church on my way to school. The sunset was just beautiful. I asked myself, “What can I do to be happy?” Just then they started to sing a song about a little boy who was walking down the street with his school books. In the song he asks the question, “What must I do to be happy?” The chorus goes like this:

**Amar como Jesus amava,  
Falar como Jesus falava,  
Pensar como Jesus pensava,  
Viver como Jesus vivia,  
Sorrir como Jesus sorria,  
Sentir como Jesus sentia,  
E ao chegar ao fim do dia,  
Sei que dormiria muito mais feliz.**

To me that song was an answer to my heavy heart. For some reason, I felt very happy.

At the orphanage we weren't allowed to show our feelings. I remember lots of nights when I would go to bed, put my head under the covers and cry my heart out. Our duty was to obey, not to question or complain. Even though I tried so hard to please Tia, she still would remind me of how ugly I was and that no one loved me.

When I turned 17, I left the orphanage and went to live on the Colony with an American family.

One Sunday morning the sun was shining, sending its golden rays to the earth. The sky was so blue with a few fluffy white clouds floating around. We were driving to church. The family seemed so happy. They were singing songs that made me think about the angels. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. Then I started to cry. I asked myself: “Why do only some people have the right to be happy?”

They kept singing:

*Alas and did my Savior bleed,  
And did my Sovereign die;  
Would He devote that sacred head  
For such a worm as I?*

And,

*At the cross, at the cross  
Where I first found the light,  
And the burden of my heart rolled away,  
It was there by faith  
I received my sight,  
And now I am happy all the day!*

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I opened my eyes and looked to Heaven. My heart felt very heavy. “My Lord, please forgive me,” I prayed. I felt a feeling overtake my heart and for some reason thought about Tia and how she had to work so hard at the orphanage to raise all the children. She helped prepare them to be able to face the disappointments of life. My heart felt light and at that moment the hate left me. I was so thankful I had had a place to live, food to eat and somebody to teach me how to work.

I changed my way of thinking about Tia and noticed that we can all be happy. It seemed like a strong arm was around me and the Lord was saying, “I love you.”

On February 22, 1989, I came to the United States to work in the Manor. A year later I started going to college to become a nurse. My work visa was running out and I needed to get a student visa. I was trying to work with the immigration office to get everything arranged. In two weeks school would be over.

One morning I went to get my mail and there was a letter from the Immigration Office for me. I opened the envelope and quickly read that I had to leave the United States in 30 days.

I left and went back to Brazil. Oh! It was so good to be back there where there are always beautiful sunsets and palm trees.

On May 5 – during my stay in Brazil – the phone rang. I answered. Someone asked, “Cris, would you like to go see Tia Amanda today?”

I was quiet for a few moments. My heart was thumping. My hands got all clammy. I wanted to run, but I heard myself saying, “OK, I’ll go with you.”

We got to the orphanage. I rang the doorbell. Somebody that I did not know answered the door. “Bom dia,” the lady said smiling at me.

“Bom dia,” I said in a voice that sounded strange even to me, “I have come to see Tia Amanda.”

The woman reached for me and gave me a big hug. It was Tia Amanda! She said, “I love you, my dear.”

I could see she had mellowed with age. I felt that she really loved me.

Because of the way I was raised, a question people over here ask me a lot is: How does God speak to people who are unfamiliar with the truth? Does He speak to them?

To answer this question, I want to tell you a little more about my life.

The orphanage I was raised in was run by spiritists. They believe we begin life as an animal. Through successive deaths and reincarnations we continually rise until we are born as a human being. Then, according to our good works, we continue to get better through each reincarnation. However, if we do bad things, we go backwards.

I went to Brasília to have surgery on my leg. I didn’t know anything about the Bible or the plan of salvation. One day I heard a lady talk about Jesus and about His life here upon earth. Sometime later I dreamt that the orphanage was on fire. One corner wasn’t in flames yet. I saw a tall man with blue eyes standing in this corner. He picked me up and I asked him to save me, but he kept saying, “No, you have to die.” Somehow I felt that this was Jesus.

Then I awoke. Later on, when I began going to church, I remembered this dream. Then I understood His words. If I wanted to be saved, self would have to die.

One day Tia came to the orphanage with an orange dress. This was a very bad sign. She was extremely upset. I was so afraid of being punished that I went to the bathroom and prayed. This was the first time in my life I really prayed to God. Normally I prayed to people who had done a lot of good works during this life.

I told the Lord that if He would help me to not get punished, I would try and be like Jesus. When I walked out into the hall, I saw a young lady with a head covering on. I was very impressed by the look on her face. I could tell that there was a big difference between her and me, even though I tried not to do bad things. She made different visits to the orphanage. She couldn't talk Portuguese and I couldn't talk English. Even so we became friends.

One day she invited us to spend the weekend with her. On Sunday she took us to church. After that I managed to go two more times. Then one of my sisters told Tia she wanted to be a Mennonite. That was it. We weren't permitted to go to church any more.

It wasn't until I went to live on the Colony that I got converted.

I really feel that God makes Himself known to people who sincerely desire to know the truth.

Today I am still an orphan. I don't have real brothers, sisters, mother or father, but I have the One who took hate out of my heart. I feel Him very close, guiding me so tenderly. ▲

## Observations

### **How America Operates**

People always pester me about what I think about the US. Now that I am spending a month here in N America, I'm going to make some random observations.

#### **Directions**

I just decided a few minutes ago that I needed a toothpick. I asked my dad where to find them. He said, "In that east cupboard door." I couldn't remember where east was, so I grabbed at the door in front of me. "No, no," he said, "the east door!" I moved over one notch, and there it was again, "The EAST door." Realizing that I was going the wrong way, I quickly moved back two doors and found them.

In Brazil we would have said, "The door to your left." And I would have understood.

Brazilians don't pay the slightest attention to north and south, east and west. So don't bother to ask them which direction point A is from point B.

#### **Meetings**

The other night I went to a big Coop meeting in Newton. After serving a meal, they had their annual business meeting. Then some big shot made a speech, trying to give a prognosis on agricultural prospects in Kansas.

The speech was good. But that wasn't what impressed me most. There must have been at least 500 people in that auditorium. During the entire business meeting and speech, people sat in absolute silence and respect. Except, of course, when the speaker said something humorous and they were expected to laugh.

I could hardly believe my eyes. Meetings in Brazil – and I'm not referring to Colony meetings of any sort – are the wildest affairs you have ever attended. They remind you just a bit of a jogo de futebol.

Let me give you an example. When I still had my store, a neighbor boy went to college to study animal husbandry. He invited me to his graduation. The crowd never did settle down. There was a constant moving about of people, constant loud talking in the crowd.

When it came time for the graduates to go to the front and receive their diplomas, we had a real barnyard scene. As one walked to the stage, his classmates began braying like a donkey. For the next one it would be something else.

The worst of all were the firecrackers. You will remember in the last issue I talked about the rocket type firecrackers they fire during soccer games. This was what they were firing outside of the building. Since we were in the third story auditorium, they exploded right outside the open windows.

When our family doctor's son graduated from medical school, Faith and I were invited to the graduation. We were unable to attend. However I was curious to know if maybe that was a bit more of a solemn affair, so I asked him about it. His sheepish grin and a few things he said told the whole story. Frankly, they love it.

All meetings or public gatherings, to a greater or lesser degree, are like this. Even our federal congress is unbelievably wild.

Long live the USA for the respect Americans show in meetings.

Dogs & Cats

I haven't seen a dog or cat in Galva. I haven't heard a dog bark at night. Positively unbelievable. But I do see rabbits hopping around. In town. This is a different world.

## **Restaurants**

Rio Verde is a city of approximately a hundred thousand inhabitants. We have a number of half horse restaurants, but only two that are considered to be really good. Very seldom are these full. The amount of people eating in restaurants is extremely low.

I am absolutely floored when I see the amount of restaurants a town the size of McPherson has. And they're full. To have the same amount of restaurants per capita, Rio Verde would have to have around a hundred.

The food in your restaurants is tolerable – until you go to pay. The price is absolutely outrageous. For that kind of money in Brazil you can have a meal in an A-1 restaurant that you won't forget for a long, long time.

Conclusion: Americans are an example to the world in a lot of things, but not in eating habits.



## **Driving**

Brazilian drivers are positively the worst in the world. No ifs and buts about this one. Americans living in Brazil aren't a whole lot better. Including me.

In Brazil we don't stop at stop signs, unless a car is coming, of course. At stop lights we stop. When Dad loaned me his car to go to Mac, the first thing I proceeded to do was run stop signs. On the highway I kept within speed limit. I'm not a fast driver. But when I got to the city limits, there was this enormously wide street with hardly anybody on it, so I kept going at more or less highway speed. After passing several vehicles that were just crawling along, it suddenly hit me that in the USA there are speed limits in town. I hit the breaks. No cops.

Later on I was driving the car again. Uncle Ed and Aunt Theda were with me. The first stop sign we came to, I just kept right on going like I would in Brazil. But all of a sudden it hit me that I should stop. So I slammed on the brakes. After coming to a shuddering halt, I headed into the intersection. About that time Uncle Ed, trying to keep his voice under control, informed me, "There's a car coming." Sure enough.

I stepped on the gas and managed to avoid a collision. I learned: a) that I must stop at stop signs, b) that after stopping it is advisable to look around to see if someone is coming.

Now when I get to a stop sign I come to an absolute halt. This gives me a sense of being quite law abiding. Then I look around to see if everything is clear. This makes me feel I really do know something about driving.

In Brazil most everything goes. One day I came to an intersection and there were two cars, facing opposite directions, parked right there, blocking traffic. The drivers appeared to be having an interesting conversation.

It is very inadvisable to honk in situations like this, but I threw prudence to the wind and gave them a quick little toot.

The look the two gentlemen gave me wasn't overly fraternal. For those of you who know Rio Verde, this happened right in front of Casa das Louças. Jonas Pagyres' wife happened to be standing in the door of the store, watching the whole thing. She turned to someone standing at her side and real loud like, so I could hear, remarked, "Aquele é o americano mais nojento da Colônia." A mild translation would be, "That is the most obnoxious American on the Colony."

Americans, when it comes to driving, I tip my hat to you.

## **Garage door openers**

We don't have these gadgets back where I come from. So I get a big kick out of using the one on Dad's car.

The other day when I came home alone, the thing flat refused to work. I pressed it every imaginable way, but nothing would happen. Dad wasn't home and the house was locked. But I decided to go and make sure he had really remembered to lock the door. When I got to the door, I found someone had changed the knob. Very strange. So I took another look at the house and found out it had changed too.

Real quick like I looked around to see if anyone was watching. Nope. I hopped into the car and drove up to the right house. The opener worked.

## **Banks**

One thing I positively can't get over is your banks. They're empty. The bank that I do my banking in – Bradesco – usually has eight to 10 tellers at work. The other day I counted approximately 60 people standing in line. In the Banco do Brasil, there are times when I believe there are possibly several hundred in line. A nation that makes its citizens stand in line has a long ways to go.

### **Animal Rights**

The big shot that gave the speech in the Coop the other night told of an animal rights movement that is in progress here in the US. Basically, it gives animals the same rights human beings have. It becomes morally wrong to have a pet dog since that is hampering its freedom. To slaughter a cow for meat is equivalent to murder. Even to step on a cockroach shows extremely poor taste.

Sick. Really sick.

## **Courteousness**

Brazilians are an extremely courteous and considerate people on a social level. However, when it comes to business places, public offices, etc., all that changes.

I am floored by the courtesy shown by your sales personnel, officials, and so on. Once again I tip my hat to America.

## **Civic Spirit**

Unfortunately, this spirit doesn't exist in Brazil. People have absolutely no conscience when it comes to littering or destroying public property.

I look at your roadsides, your spotless cities, your neat lawns, and realize that Brazil is at least 200 years behind.

## **Public Trust**

I have a hard time getting used to the fact that if you buy something here and it doesn't work, you can take it back for a courteous exchange or refund – no questions asked. It is evident they trust the customer. I'm sure that some take advantage of this policy, but even so it tells you there is still a lot of good moral fiber left. ▲

## **Economy**

### **Living With Inflation**

I constantly hear questions about our inflation. To explain that our inflation has been up to 80% can bring an astonished stare. To add that it was 80% per month makes the stare go blank.

Let's take a street level look at inflation. What happens when it really gets bad?

The first thing you notice is that Cruzeiro bills of larger and larger denomination

keep coming out. All of a sudden you find that an 8-digit calculator is too small for many calculations. Bills continue to grow: \$10,000. Next comes \$50,000. Then \$100,000 This is when it gets interesting.

Back to the lines in the banks. You go into a bank and see nine lines with maybe 10-15 people in each. Somewhere in there you see a line with only two people. You think, “How stupid!” Real smug like you become the third person in that line. It’s hard to resist giving all the others a quick victory glance. They stare at you poker faced.

The first man in the line finishes and now you are but two. You give the dumb people in the other lines another quick victory glance. They all seem to be suppressing smiles.

The man in front of you places his attaché case on the counter and opens it. It is crammed with money. He begins shoving money over the counter to the teller.

By now you have totally lost your desire to look around at the folks in the other lines. Furthermore, for some reason, they all seem to have their eyes riveted on you. It’s obvious they are enjoying it immensely.

You’re not a quitter. You stand firm in your tiny little line. Five minutes go by. Ten minutes. Twenty minutes. In another line you could have already been taken care of, but so what?

Finally, counting the last bill, the teller says to the customer, “Eighteen million, seven hundred and fifty four thousand, two hundred and forty two cruzeiros?”

The customer nods in agreement.

It could have been worse.

And it will be. Now the customer reaches into his pockets and begins to produce more bills. Then the front of his shirt is unbuttoned and in what amounts to a monetary caesarean, a new stack of bills is placed on the counter. That accounts for the gentleman’s irregular waistline.

Rather than admit defeat, like the US Marines, you turn around and march forward to the rear of another line. All the time you carefully study the design on the floor right in front of you.

I can guarantee you that one experience like this is enough. From then on you expertly analyze a line before taking your place. Any attaché cases? Any bulging midriffs? Any plain paper packages tied up with store string?

Since we’re in the bank, let’s watch the tellers just a bit as they handle huge amounts of bills. One teller will handle more bills in a half hour than one of your tellers will handle in a week or two.

How do they do it? Brazilians have elevated money counting to a true art. I love to watch them count money. Obviously I can’t demonstrate in this paper how it is done, but it would almost be worth a trip to Brazil just to watch them for a little while. Not only bank personnel are good at it. Most everyone is – even children.

They don’t count money like you Americans do. I watched your bank tellers. They act like they are scared of the stuff. It gets on my nerves to watch them gingerly handle the bills. Perfectly at ease, Brazilians count by touch and not by sight. You will see them

counting away, looking around. As friends come into the bank, they will nod and smile. Maybe even say a word or two – never missing a beat on their counting.

One day I was in the bank with a stack of money. The fellow was counting away, looking around. Suddenly he stopped, pulled a bill out of the stack, held it up to the light for a moment, and told me, “This one is counterfeit.”

Sure enough it was. Strictly by touch, while counting at high speed, he detected the bill.

When inflation is sky high, prices become totally unpredictable. I remember hearing someone telling about buying a truckload of building tile. He went to a building materials supply store and got the price. It was absolutely outrageous – at least to his way of thinking. He told the man so, adding that he would go buy from the competitor down the street. This didn’t seem to shake the man too much.

I can’t remember if the competitor didn’t have any tile, or if it was even higher. Suddenly he realized that if he wanted tile, he had better head back to the first place. He walked in and told the man, “I’ll take that load of tile.”

“No you won’t,” the man told him. “I just sold out.”

“OK, when you get your next shipment in, you can deliver a truckload to my place.”

“Yes,” the man said, “But I suppose you know that it won’t be at this price.”

I knew a man who sold a large fazenda (farm). His plan was to sell this farm and buy another that he already had spotted. However, when he went to close the deal on the land he wanted to purchase, he felt it was too high, so he held off. The land went up some more. Apparently he thought it would come back down. Finally, when he realized what was happening, and went ahead and bought, he realized he had lost a small fortune. Inflation had eaten up his money.

With high inflation interest rates are high in the bank – usually about 6% above inflation. So, when inflation hits 45%, you can expect to get around a 51% return on money put on savings.

You would be surprised how many Brazilians sell their farm, or their house, their car, or whatever, and put the money on savings. Remember the interest is compounded monthly.

So you put an equivalent of US\$50,000 in the bank. Now get out your calculator and see how much you will have in a year if the interest remains the same and is compounded and you make no withdrawals. Here’s how you do it: Take \$50,000 times 51% and add it to the principal. Take that total and multiply it by 51% and add it to the principal. Do this 12 times.

Didn’t work, did it? An eight digit calculator won’t handle such a figure.

It’s mind boggling to know how your money multiplies. People lose their head. And their fortune, if they’re not real careful.

How? First of all, the official inflation rate is frequently lower than the actual inflation. Savings accounts do good to hold their own against real inflation. Sometimes they lose.

If people would never withdraw any money, they might break even. But, about the

second month, as they see the money stack up, they withdraw enough to buy a new car. And still have more in the bank than they started with. Soon they begin living high on the hog with the interest they get. But the day comes when they find that the money they have in the bank has lost its value. They can't begin to buy a farm similar to the one they sold a year ago.

When inflation gets bad enough and the bills become so enormously big that money must be carried in a sack, the government has the habit of knocking off three zeros. People frequently ask me who takes the beating.

No one. Three zeros are knocked off of positively everything – what you have and what you owe. You go to bed one night with 10 million cruzeiros in the bank. You wake up the next and find that you have only 10 thousand. But, if you were owing someone five million cruzeiros, you are now owing only five thousand. No one gains. No one loses. Or rather, everyone gains by having a more manageable currency.

Just before we moved to Brazil in 69 they knocked off three zeros. A number of years later they knocked off another three and then two more. That makes a total of eight zeros in less than 25 years.

Why is inflation bad?

First of all because it degenerates into a free for all that could best be described as “survival of the slickest.” If someone makes money with inflation, obviously someone has to lose money. Unfortunately, the loser is almost always the poor class. Slowly but surely their buying power erodes until life becomes a battle for survival.

Now a little rundown on our present inflation.

I have mentioned in previous articles that the normal procedure when inflation began getting out of hand was to slap on a general freeze. This could be compared to the man who has so many problems that he takes to drinking. For a little while, everything seems to be just fine. But once he sobers up, it is worse than ever.

President Collor has deregulated virtually all prices. And inflation is coming down. McDonalds has reduced its prices by 30%. Fiat suspended a 10% increase, which translates into a 10% decrease.

In an interview with VEJA magazine, Collor states why he feels things are looking up: “We have pulled out of a hiper-inflation that hit 84% a month. Our economy was closed to the outside, totally handcuffed by government regulation. Today we have no price controls and inflation is beginning to come down. Our international monetary reserves have never been as good as they are now. The fact that foreign investment is again increasing is a sign that our credibility is being restored. The dollar is proof of this. For the first time since 1965, the parallel exchange is below the official. So far as our foreign debt, the International Monetary Fund has accepted our letter of intentions. Negotiations with foreign bankers is going very well.”

Keep tuned. Things are happening. ▲

## Off the Subject

# Sunday School

Have you ever tried to imagine what Sunday morning services would be like without Sunday School?

It's hard to imagine. We have grown up with Sunday School. We appreciate it. For most of us, it has been a source of many blessings.

Sunday School, as conducted in the Church of God in Christ, is made up of four basic parts: the lesson, the superintendent, the teacher, and the students. In this article we attempt to carefully analyze each one.

**The lesson.** We as a church took a giant step forward when we decided to write, edit, and publish our own lessons. Many excellent lessons have been written and enjoyed by those attending Sunday School.

It is important that those writing lessons remember that all comments made by them, beginning with the introduction, should be relevant to the lesson title and the lesson text. As the lesson is being written, the author should frequently stop and ask himself: Is what I am writing in tune with the title and text of this lesson? If the answer is no, he should backtrack to where he got sidetracked and restart at that point.

It is easy to overlook the importance of the Illustrations section of the lesson. A story well told – especially an experience – is an impressive way to wind up a lesson. Very few, if any, comments should be given here. A good illustration talks for itself.

**The superintendent.** The superintendent should be a man filled with the Spirit, with enthusiasm, but not with words. A long introduction is the best way there is to wreck a Sunday School lesson. Never should he tell the congregation what his conclusions were as he studied the lesson. Two or three well placed questions can do miracles. An experience told in a few words, or an illustration can be helpful. To occasionally call on a group to sing a fitting song is not out of place. The superintendent's job is to take the cap off the gas tank – not to fill it with gas.

**The teacher.** No matter how good the lesson and no matter how efficient the superintendent, without a prepared teacher, the class will very likely be a failure.

What constitutes a good teacher?

1. Above everything else, a good teacher is a spiritual brother or sister. But that's not enough.

2. A good teacher will love Sunday School. A good teacher will love Sunday School. A good teacher will love Sunday School... (No, my computer didn't blow a fuse.) A teacher who loves Sunday School will be a Sunday School supporter.

3. A good teacher studies his lesson. He doesn't only read it. He studies it. He studies it already at the beginning of the week so that he can meditate, and if necessary, do some research. This doesn't mean he knows all the answers. In fact, he shouldn't know them all. It means that he is prepared to both ask questions and intelligently handle questions that the class may ask.

4. A good teacher tries to never be absent on his Sunday to teach.

How should a good Sunday School class be conducted?

First of all, the teacher needs to be the teacher. He should NOT slink in and inconspicuously sit down on the bench somewhere with the rest of the class. Preferably he will stand up in front of the class. Or depending on circumstances, sit on a chair facing the class.

Why?

To understand why, let's try and understand what the teacher should do once he is in the classroom.

Never, never should a teacher open a class with the statement, "Well, it's open for discussion." Even though everyone has studied his lesson, the teacher should always clearly state the title of the lesson. The Key Verse can be read, and in some cases, the Introduction. This depends on the teacher and the circumstances. Once this little preliminary is taken care of, the teacher should take half a minute or so and tell the class how he feels about the lesson. This should be a frank statement. It may be, "I have found this lesson to be very difficult. I'm anxious to know how the rest of you have found it."

How much is said will depend very much on the individual class. In some classes – especially adult classes – at this point it may be possible to open it up for discussion. In some classes it is necessary to make a few additional comments and then ask a question. Just in case that question fizzles out, have another one or two prepared that approach the lesson from a different angle.

A teacher should never, never be prepared to preach a sermon in case the class won't talk. The class senses it when a teacher is prepared to preach and usually give him the chance.

Teachers should learn to build on what the students say. All too often a student comes up with a good thought, but for some reason no one picks it up. The alert teacher will pick up this thought and weave it into a pattern. "What John just said agrees with what Pete said in the beginning."

The teacher should not stand up front leafing through his quarterly while others are speaking. He should look at them. Let them know he is following what they are saying. Especially in the case of a student who feels a bit insecure it is helpful to comment, "I appreciate that thought. I had never really thought of it in those terms, but it definitely makes sense."

Teachers should think of their Sunday School class as a long bicycle that has as many seats and sets of pedals as there are students. The teacher sits in the front seat and does the steering.

To get a class started, a teacher must frequently pedal hard. However, the moment he feels others are beginning to pedal, he should slack off. It is his job to make all of the riders feel that they are responsible to help keep the bike moving. If, as can happen in rare cases, no one pedals, the teacher should try several different approaches to get the others interested. If this doesn't work, he too should stop peddling. Usually several minutes of silence will break the ice. Never should he launch into a sermon when this happens.

Back to the bicycle, not only must the teacher pedal at times, but he must always steer. Even adult classes can get way off the subject. In rare occasions this is tolerable. To stick to the lesson can best be described as decency and order. Especially when sensitive areas are touched on, the teacher should be quick to use the handle bars.

The students. For the students to think everything depends on the teacher is most unfair. They too must pedal. They too must study their lesson. They too must meditate during the week.

The lesson should not be studied in an attempt to learn all the answers. Few things can upset a class more than to have a student who tries to give his “conclusions” on every question that is asked.

Each student should feel he is part of the class, that he has a responsibility. Anytime no one talks in class, it’s a good idea to calculate more or less how many minutes went by in silence. Multiply that by the number of students present. That is the number of man/minutes that have been wasted. Time is too precious for this.

A Sunday School class should be regarded as a place where interesting things are discovered. Think of it as a puzzle. As each student makes his contribution a picture begins to form. At the end of the class we hear comments like, “You know, I had never thought of that before.”

That’s what Sunday School is all about. It is a place to share ideas and convictions. Not a place to open the door on a cage full of ideas and see how many you as a student can get flying around.

We as a church need to be more careful in selecting our teachers. Not everyone has the gift of teaching. To place a brother who doesn’t have this gift in a position he is unable to fill is not advisable. In fact it can be distressing to both the teacher and the students.

In our Sunday morning services we have Sunday School and preaching. We would be extremely disappointed if Sunday after Sunday our ministers failed to prepare themselves. Their lackluster sermons would soon affect overall attendance. It would be the talk of the town that our ministers were letting us down.

What about us when we don’t prepare for Sunday School? Before the Lord, the infraction is the same, is it not? Maybe in a lesser degree, but the same.

**Now, a few ways to wreck your Sunday School:**

1. Miss once in a while.
2. Don’t study your lesson.
3. Don’t talk in class.
4. Talk too much.
5. Try and get others to see things as you do.
6. Enjoy and promote a good argument.

**What are some signs of a successful class?**

1. When the final bell rings, everyone would like another 15 minutes to finish the discussion.
2. When you see small groups of brethren returning to the main auditorium, still discussing the lesson.



3. When the minister gets up to have the introduction, he has been so impressed by the discussion that he makes more comments on the lesson.
4. When someone says, "I had never thought of that before." ▲

## **This & That**

Leila, Mrs. Jonathan Coblentz was to Goiânia for removal of a brain tumor. She is recuperating as well as can be expected. Bert Coblentz came out from the US to be with his children during this time.

Earl and Johanna Schmidt left for the States to attend her mother's funeral.

John & Joan Unruh and daughter Marion, Dean & Esther Mininger and son Weston, Elias & Colleen and son Renato all left for the US to attend Annual Meeting.

Leonard & Moselly Koepl and daughter Joan left for the US, where they plan on spending a year or so. Lana Fast accompanied them after having spent some time here visiting her Loewen relation.

Caleb & Joan Holdeman had a boy, Marshall Lee, on the 18th of March. Cute (as a Holdeman can get).

Júlio, the little boy that stayed at Glenn Hibners is back at their place for an indefinite period. The Monte Alegre Junior Sewing girls made up the 24 layette bundles that were sewn by both the Junior and Adult Sewing Circles. These bundles are distributed by Dr. Sílvio, the municipal Secretary of Health, to poor women enrolled in his pre-natal classes. Quilt blocks were cut too for Colleen Stoltzfus' quilt.

The Monte Alegre Adult Sewing did some sewing for Brad and Joleen's girls.

For you good folks in Brazil, I wore a suit here. Twice.

Kindergarten classes in the Monte Alegre school began on March 23. With the two students from the Rio Verdinho School who are attending, there are 10 students.

Ely Bessa and Vânia Martins are busily getting ready for their April 5th wedding. This is to be in the town church.

The Kramers put a culvert bridge in the stream between their place and Emma Burns'. It's a real improvement over the old one.

Corn harvest is the same as over. Soybean harvest is in full swing. Frequent showers are hampering the harvest.

Dan & Alma Martin moved to Moundridge. Their son Daniel Jr accompanied them during this move.

Mim Burns, who had the article in the last Brazil News on the Rio Verdinho Bridge Accident has informed me that her last name is Dirks. So be it.

I left for the States the 26th of this month to be with my mother. She passed away a day after I got here. I will be staying here with my dad for a month. I brought my Brick (computer) along in my briefcase, so my work continues about as usual. This issue of Brazil News is being published and mailed here. I'd like to thank the different readers who expressed their sympathy.