

Brazil News



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Editorial

Classes

In my recent visit to the US, what probably impressed me more than anything else, was the size of the American middle class.

Upon returning to Brazil, what probably impressed me more than anything else, was the size of the Brazilian middle class.

The economical backbone of any nation is made up of the elite. Whether you like it or not, it's true. People criticize the late Sam Walton for being so outrageously rich. Their reasoning, after being run through a cream separator, goes something like this: It just isn't fair that Sam Walton should be worth billions and the majority of the people be worth only thousands. Or they say: Look at how many businesses have folded up on account of Sam Walton.

Folks, that's capitalism. If you don't like it, you've got two options: Cuba or China.

It's the rich people, the elite, maybe 5% of the population, that keep a nation on an even keel financially. And it makes sense. The rest, the 95%, don't have the combination of qualifications, which include vision, determination and ruthlessness, that it takes to make a country prosper financially. Karl Marx felt badly toward this class. So did Lenin. He showed us what happens when it is eliminated.

The middle class is the moral backbone of a nation. The elite make up the head, but the middle class are the heart. They are the brawn. They put the seed in the ground. They tighten down the bolts. They drive trucks and pilot airplanes. They are specialists in making things happen.

The poor class didn't used to be worth much. Now that they have learned to put an X on a ballot, at least the politicians appreciate them. But that's about it. Even the church has found it's very difficult to get a work going among people who are so poor they are hungry.

To a large extent, the US has managed to come up with a good balance between the

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classes. There is a small elite. There is a small poor class—which the Bible says there will always be. What is truly outstanding is the enormous size of the middle class. I tip my hat to America for this.

Brazil has a bloated elite. It has a small middle class and an enormous poor class. Except for some areas in the Northeast, the poor are not supported by the government. They must make their living on a hundred dollars a month or less. Call it “20th century slavery” if you will.

Let me explain what I mean by a “bloated elite.” In any nation, the elite will be small because, by natural selection, the majority of the people don’t have the mental capacity to be up in the belfry pulling the ropes that make things happen. When the elite becomes larger than normal, either we are dealing with a super race, or with an elite that has a bunch of culls in it.

Unfortunately, the latter is true in Brazil. It has been this way right from the beginning. Even more unfortunately, at times there are more culls than capable men up in the belfry pulling the ropes.

This is why we have such a large poor class. These pseudo-elite use the poor class, not the middle class, to do much of their work. Why? Because the middle class won’t work for a hundred dollars a month. This means there is a constant turnover of workers. Rather than pay a man according to his skill, he’s fired and another put in his place who is willing to begin at the bottom of the pay scale. This makes for shoddy products. Ironically, it also makes for expensive products. Something shoddy obviously doesn’t sell well. Since the volume of sales is low, the price is increased to still come up with a good profit margin.

This feeds the vicious circle. The poor remain poor, because a) wages are low, and b) consumer products are high.

Very few from the middle class are capable of migrating to the upper or elite class. However, many from the poor class are capable of rising to the middle class. When the poor class remains large, one must conclude that something is seriously out of order.

What, really, does it mean to be middle class?

A middle class family makes enough money, either by working as a day laborer or being self employed, to:

>Eventually—possibly over a period of 20 or 30 years—own a comfortable home furnished with reasonably good furniture.

>Buy sufficient food for the family.

>Keep the family well clothed.

>Own a reasonably good car. Not necessarily a new one, but neither an old junker.

>Give their children an education that will prepare them to meet the challenges of life.

>Take care of routine medical and dental needs of the family. Not included would be a serious accident or illness that runs into tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars.

>Help others. As projects come up, feel they are paying in their share to keep the church programs operating. This last item would, of course, apply more to church folks.

>Feel, as the years go by, that slowly they are getting ahead financially.

Until Brazil is able to get a system in motion that lets the majority of its citizens come under the middle class status, their problems will be enormous.

President Collor is very much aware of this. He seems to be sincerely interested in changing the situation. Needless to say, he is facing a lot of opposition.

This problem has a very direct influence on the Colony. To understand why, let's look over the situation in N America.

Part of the Holdeman Mennonites are farmers. Not nearly all of them.

Those who aren't can usually get a job that will fill their basic needs to be middle class citizens.

Different ones have started up small businesses that can be run on almost a family basis.

For single teachers, and in some cases married ones, teaching in church schools can make a comfortable living.

Our situation here is different. In general terms, the only profession that offers a comfortable living is farming. Jobs in town, except for those with exceptional skills or who hold a college diploma, are low paying. Most business ventures would have to be in town, which wouldn't really fit into the "family" type situation described. It certainly isn't an ideal place to raise a family. School teaching isn't a bad deal for a single teacher living with her parents. A married man will not consider making a career of teaching.

Even now we have farmers on the Colony who would do much better at some sort of a job. This is not to their discredit. But it certainly is to their disadvantage.

Whom do we blame? More than anyone else, we must blame the system in general, the fact that it is very difficult to get into the middle class without some kind of help.

Since the problem on a national level very likely won't be solved for a number of years, where does that leave the Colony? It leaves us in an uncomfortable situation. Obviously the solution is not a handout to those who are struggling to survive. It isn't creating a fictitious job and paying high salary as sort of a mission project. The truth of the matter is that as long as this problem exists on a national level, it will exist on the Colony too—unless a solution is found.

On the positive side of the ledger, we have situations here where young boys go to work for an American for a low wage. However, at the end of the year there is a good bonus. Not only is there a bonus. As the hired man proves to be a faithful worker, he is given other opportunities. If he decides to get married, a house is possibly furnished and sometimes transportation. If this young man is patient and faithful, over a period of years he can become a solid middle class citizen. This obviously doesn't settle everyone's problem, but it's a start. ▲

Remembering Out Loud

Remembering What?

This is a new section that will be coming out in this little paper. So many times, in conversations here, things come up that happened in the past. They're interesting little incidents, but hardly material for an entire article. That's what Remembering Out Loud is about. We're going to be remembering out loud, interesting incidents from the past.

Hard Times

Last night, being the 5th Sunday of the month, we had a Singspiration in church. There was time for volunteers and Daniel Kramer told a little story related to the song “Give Me a Foothold on the Rock,” and then asked Jesse Loewen to lead it as a congregational song. This is the story:

The Daniel Kramer family came to Brazil in November of 69—planting season in this part of the country. Obviously, there was no time to clear land and get a crop in, so during that year the Kramer family worked at getting established. A year later they put out their first crop.

A lot of hopes were placed on this crop of rice. Since Daniel had left only a small monetary reserve in the States, things were getting tight.

The rice came up and grew. So did Kramer’s hopes—until the crop was around a foot tall. Then it began to turn yellow and die. An agronomist in town offered them no hopes. Termites were boring into the stalks and killing the rice. What could be done about it? Nothing, Daniel was told.

Instead of making 200 sacks to the alqueire, it made 40. To worsen things, the bottom fell out of the price of rice. Daniel had to hold his crop for another year before being able to sell it.

During this second year period, Daniel managed to land one small job doing a little construction work for Reno Hibner. That didn’t get the wolf away from the back door; it just caused it to flinch.

Meals became meager and more meager. Finally even the basics, salt, sugar and flour were all but depleted. Then one morning John Penner stopped by. He was on his way to town. He said, “Daniel, I’m going to town, do you need anything?”

“Yes,” Daniel told him, “We are out of groceries—but we’re also out of money.”

“That’s OK,” John said, “Go ahead and make out a list and I’ll bring you what you need.”

Daniel excused himself, went inside and together with Anna, his wife, made out a list of the bare necessities. Then he returned and gave John the list. John looked it over and said, “That’s not enough to keep you going. Go make another list. Pay me when you can.”

That is what Daniel did. The worst of the crisis was temporarily solved.

Two years without an income and a large family don’t make a good mixture. Daniel began to feel the strain of all this. Then one Sunday in Church, Pete Loewen, with his typical warmth and enthusiasm, lead the congregational song, “Give Me a Foothold”. As many voices joined to sing, I Strive to reach an anch’ring place; / My God, give me a stay; / Extend to me Thy hand of grace, / Lest I be cast away, Daniel found the solution to his unrest. The problem remained, but he was now spiritually prepared to handle it. In about three months he was able to pay off the grocery loan and slowly things began to improve.

It Wasn't an Easy Road

While Daniel was talking, my mind went back over 20 years. After a lot of struggles, Faith and I became a two-bicycle family. We lived where Leo & Mim live now, probably about three miles from church. The roads weren't graded up like now.

At this time we were a family of six and these two bikes were our sole means of transportation. Going to church in normal weather wasn't half bad. On the back of the bike that Faith rode, I had attached a small wooden box. Lucas, age 1, with his knees hitched up to his chin, would ride in the box. Yolanda, age 4, would sit sideways on the bar between the seat and the handle bars.

I would take the other children on my bike. Carlos, 7, would ride behind and Denise, 10, would sit on the bar in front of me.

For light when it was dark, I had a little generator light that ran off of the tire. By Faith staying ahead of me, we could both have a bit of light.

But when it rained or the roads were muddy, things were different. For one thing, the generator couldn't be used when there was mud on the tires.

I remember very clearly—and so does Faith—one night when we were going home from church in the rain. The children had caught a ride with Enos and Clara Miller. Faith and I went on the bikes. Since the roads were muddy, the headlight didn't work. It was DARK. And we were soaked. We tried to keep on the road by occasional lightning flashes. More often than not we would end up in the mud. Finally we decided to push the bikes. We made it home.

Storms

Normally the rainy season is issued in by violent rain and wind storms. Here's a storm Faith and I will never forget.

We had been here for several months and were living in a tent together with all of our earthly belongings.

None of our group was familiar with these initial storms and consequently we had no idea how vicious they can be.

Faith's folks invited John Penners over, we all had dinner together in the cracker box house. It was in the afternoon and the clouds got darker and darker. Then came the wind and the sheets of rain. From the cracker box we could see our tent was in danger of collapsing. So Faith and I made our way to the tent. We got in, but not out of the rain. The top was sagging way down, loaded with water. We would push up and get the water to drain. Then we would look after our things while the "top" would fill with water again.

The water simply poured in. Strangely, the tent leaked water in, but not out. The water level inside was much higher than outside. We had our worldly belongings up on a small platform, but the water seemed determined to get to them from both the top and the bottom. One could almost sympathize with the folks back in the times of Noah when the fountains of the deep were opened.

Finally there was but one solution. With my hunting knife I slit open the back end of the tent. Then the waters began to subside.

I am told that back in the cracker box things weren't all that much better. The masonite roof leaked so bad that finally John and Alma opened their umbrella and huddled under it to keep from getting soaked. One can imagine what a mud puddle the dirt floor turned into.

It's amazing how much more interesting it is to talk about these experiences than it was to actually live through them.

I realize that there are literally hundreds of these experiences that could—and should—be told. I would like to ask my Colony readers to put on their thinking cap and remember some of them. Write them down, or tell them to me, to be published. This is the side of pioneering that culls the men from the boys. These are the experiences that will be forever lost if no one writes them down. We can't let that happen. ▲

Politics

Collargate

Before I begin, I might mention that after Watergate, the word gate has the same connotation of scandal here as in the US, and is frequently used as a suffix, as illustrated in this title.

I mentioned in an earlier issue that Collor, the president of Brazil, has the intelligence to be a great president, but possibly not the personality. Recent events have once again pointed in this direction.

Politics are rotten. We all know that. Every place in the world. Brazil certainly deserves a place of honor in this ranking.

Years ago a president was elected on the platform he came up with. In other words, the campaign centered around solid issues. The voter weighed up the issues and voted for candidate A or candidate B.

Today that has changed. The basic ideas and convictions of a presidential candidate have a lot less influence on the voter than how he handled himself on TV. This isn't all bad. Or rather, this could have a positive side to it if even what is seen on TV wasn't staged. A good campaign manager is worth more than good ideas. This is true all over the world.

This brings us to Collorgate. Collor, a dark horse candidate in the last election, won by waging a very effective campaign. Or rather, by cleverly picking men who could run an effective campaign for him. One of these was Paulo César Farias (better known as PC).

PC was famous (infamous, if you please) for the shady deals he made. But he was able to make things happen so Collor chose him to manage his presidential campaign.

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This was good, because largely thanks to him, he today is in the presidency. This is bad, because due to him, he may lose his presidency.

Enter Pedro Melo, president Collor's younger brother.

Pedro is the kind of brother everyone would enjoy not having. He is headstrong, intelligent and daring. It isn't a good idea to rub his feathers the wrong way.

Pedro introduced PC to Collor as the ideal man to manage his campaign. Obviously, back in those days Pedro and PC were on good terms. Once Collor was elected, PC obviously expected high level favors that would pave the road for his pet projects. Everything would indicate the president played ball with him.

So far so good. But it happens that in the state of Alagoas, where the Collor family is from, Pedro owns a number of television stations and daily papers. PC, unscrupulous as usual, began eyeing Pedro's territory and decided he would like to have part of it. When Pedro sought authorization to open some new TV stations, PC requested—quietly, of course—that the government deny his request. These he wanted for himself.

When Pedro caught on to what was happening, he was furious. He called in reporters from the VEJA magazine and told what he knew about PC. He also told what he knew about his brother, the president.

People said Pedro was crazy, so he submitted to having three psychiatrists examine his hayloft. They reported no spider webs. That cleared him to keep on talking. I won't go into the charges here. While he does give the impression of being a bit crazy in the head, too much of what he says seems to have a lot of truth in it. We have a saying here that seems to apply very well in the Collorgate mess: O povo aumenta, mas não inventa. Translated: People will stretch the truth, but there is a grain of truth to what they say.

This has placed politicians in a curious dilemma. Some time ago I wrote about a scandal that involved his wife Rosane. In an unusual gesture of good will, congressmen accepted the results of an investigation that cleared her of any unethical conduct. The feeling I got was that congress realized that Collor was doing a good work and wasn't willing to let his wife's conduct interfere.

The charges this time are a lot more serious. Congress is still showing a reluctance to get involved, but it's possible that they won't have any graceful way out. In other words, the facts may be so blatant that they will be forced to act to save face. Obviously, there are already those calling for his head.

So far as inflation, it has settled in at 20% per month. A more powerful antibiotic is needed to get it to come down again. It is believed that only a tax reform can do this. This will be no small job—especially with Collorgate in the air. Ten years ago the military would have taken over. Not today. Brazil has progressed. ▲

Life in Brazil

I Build a Chimney

One of the interesting developments in the Brazil move was the spawning of new masons. Different ones learned enough about the trade to be able to lay up their own houses.

I didn't become a mason. When you get done reading this story, you'll understand why.

I asked Dennis Kramer (Daniel's nephew) to build me a fireplace. By now you've guessed that all good Kramers are masons. Dennis did a beautiful job and got the chimney right up to the roof. Then he had to take off for a few days.

I was in a hurry for a fireplace. It can get mighty cold here in June and July. So I decided to become a mason. After all, as I remember it, the chimney was two bricks one way and a brick and a half the other. I would have to lay up approximately three feet of brick.

Surely my mental capacities would permit me to build a structure two bricks by one and a half brick by three feet tall. But wait.

I would have to work on the roof of the house. Anatomically I do not adapt well to the hardwood sheeting that we place our clay roofing tile on. But if Kramers were smart enough to sit on a roof, surely I would be too.

I began hauling materials and equipment up to the building site: bricks, a mortar board with mortar, a trowel, and a level.

Now came the glorious moment in which I would prove to myself and my posterity that I was a mason. A born mason. The time I had spent watching the Kramers lay brick would now pay rich dividends.

I don't know how many of my readers have watched a professional mason lay brick. It's an inspiration, a work of art. Old man Kramer, for example, he takes his trowel and sloshes around in the mud until it's just right. All the while he can be talking about the last pig hunt he was on (or yelling for bricks). But it's all so natural.

Then comes the moment of truth when the mason smoothly slices his trowel into the mud, expertly lifts it with just the right amount of mud on it. Now, with a majestic movement of the arm, he brings his trowel up, up, up, and toward the place on the wall where he wants the mud to be.

Then comes the part of the show that I like best. The operator of the trowel suddenly turns the thing upside down, and defying all laws of gravity, the mud sticks to the trowel. That's right. One quick flick and the upside-down trowel is evenly spreading the mud where it belongs. No mess. No guesswork.

Well, here I was, also a mason, on the top of my house, ready to begin my new career.

My first step was to take the trowel and mess around in the mud. This I found I was capable of.

Step two was to get mud on my trowel and transport it to the exact spot where I hoped to place a brick. I dug in and managed to get some mud on my trowel, then I went up, up, up, just like an old pro. I was a mason.

The next step, of course, would be to suddenly flip the trowel in midair, defy gravity, move forward, and with a quick swish, plunk the mud down. However, as I majestically reached the zenith of the trajectory, my trowel suddenly became very light. Before I had time to meditate on that one, mud began splattering over everything.

What had happened? As nearly as I can reconstruct the incident, the problem was my flight plan. I apparently banked my trowel at too sharp an angle and the mud slid off and down. Gravity. That was the problem.

I settled on a less complicated flight plan to transport my mud. Very carefully balancing my trowel, I moved through the air sort of like the Wright brothers on their maiden flight. Less show, less speed, but I got there.

Once I got my mud where it belonged, I needed to place a brick on it. This is where my bricklaying career began going to shreds. To me brick laying could be resumed in “swish, plunk, swish, plunk, swish, plunk...). Swish is when you put the mortar where it belongs and plunk is when you plunk the brick down on top of it. But wait.

When Kramer puts a brick on the mortar, he gives it two or three little taps with the trowel handle, and presto. With his trowel he flicks up the loose mortar on either side of the brick, and there it is as pretty as you please.

After I put my brick down, I tapped it, and TAPPED it, and TAPPED it. Stubborn brick. First was a gravity problem and now I had brick that refused to settle into place.

Finally, by controlling the amount of mud I put down, I was able to limp through the tap, tap problem. My chimney was slowing going up. One course done. Six brick laid. And I a mason. But wait.

I began on the next course. Not too bad, not too bad. Until I got out the level. Not too good, not too good. My chimney was out of plumb (I learned from the Kramers you never say “out of level.” Only non-masons say that.) Possibly due to my lack of velocity, my mortar had set up so well that I couldn’t budge the bricks. The only solution was to break them loose, remove the mortar, and start over. That’s a real blow to a fledging mason.

Very frankly, I never imagined how many things can go wrong in building a tiny little chimney. For one thing, my roof was built on a slant, or like builders say, had a pitch to it. I soon found I had a talent for building perpendicular to the pitch (which did strange things to the bubble on my level). That I don’t consider to be a strike against me. I believe I would have been fabulous at building pyramids.

I soon found that by unconsciously opening my mortar joints, my chimney suddenly took on the aspect of the old steam engine smoke stacks that would balloon out toward the top.

With great effort I overcame these problems. Suddenly I had the inspiration of placing the level over the top of the chimney. Here I found was one more hidden trap in my new profession. In my effort to not build perpendicular to the slant of the roof, to keep everything plumb, to not balloon out like a smoke stack, I had been putting more mortar on one end of the chimney than on the other. I had discovered the art of making the bubble in the level disappear.

I finally got built what from the road resembled a chimney. And by no means was it a total failure. When a fire was lit underneath, smoke came out on top.

That's success. Especially so when you figure that three thousand and some years ago I would probably have been an expert pyramid builder.

Who knows, maybe the pyramids started out as chimneys. Even so, I have given up being a mason. ▲

Health

Ambulance Service

I promised last month that I would make some comments about our ambulance service. What I say will be about the interior of Brazil. I understand that in the southern part of the country they have something that at least resembles what you have in N America.

In our area, is an ambulance called when there is an accident or someone has a heart attack? No. The almost exclusive function of an ambulance here is to transfer patients between hospitals, and especially to Goiânia.

What happens when there is an accident? If you read the articles on the Kramer accident and the accident on the Rio Verdão bridge, you will know. A good Samaritan comes along, puts the victim into his vehicle, and hauls them to the hospital. Thank goodness, there are many, many good Samaritans in this country.

Obviously, not being trained personnel, the treatment dispensed to the patients is not always the most gentle. Yet it works.

Years ago I heard a story in Rio Verde—which likely isn't totally true—of a fellow who was driving down the street and hit a pedestrian. Quick as a whisk he loaded the victim into his vehicle and took out for the hospital. Back those days the town was small enough that the farthest possible point to the hospital wouldn't have been over a mile. The driver was so rattled, they say it took him over an hour to get to the hospital.

I wish our system here was better. I don't doubt that with time it will improve. In the meantime we must trust in the Lord. For Him it isn't a difficult task to direct the action of the good Samaritans who willingly help out. ▲

Off the Subject

As His Master

Everyone that is perfect shall be as his master. —Luke 6:40

The New English Bible says, "But everyone, when his training is complete, will reach his teacher's level."

In the 3d epistle of John, verse 4, the apostle declares, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

In the natural sense, the greatest honor a child can confer upon his parents is to develop into a useful citizen. Likewise, the greatest honor a student can bestow on his master is to skillfully apply in daily life, the lessons learned while under his tutorage.

Thus it follows that the greatest honor a Christian can confer upon his Master is to develop in His image.

We can but speculate as to what the twelve men called by Jesus to be His apostles would have turned out to be had they never learned to know the Master. The fishermen would probably have fished the rest of their lives. Matthew would have probably retired as a rich tax collector. Luke would probably have spent his days as a physician.

The Master made a profound mark on the lives of the apostles. Peter and John, unlettered men, who were more at home in a fisherman's boat than in a classroom, received from their enemies a diploma that far exceeds what any institution of learning can bestow upon its graduates. Hearing about the powerful sermons preached by these two apostles, and the miracles done by them, the religious rulers called them in for a hearing. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 3:13).

Yes, these enemies of Jesus Christ gave Peter and John a diploma that said, As His Master.

Had Peter and John been learned men with university degrees, their hearers might have said, "You can sure tell they have studied in Harvard – or in Yale." But since these disciples were fishermen, they said, "You sure can tell they have been around Jesus."

As his Master.

It might have been different. Peter and John didn't just hang around Jesus. They didn't just talk about what a great man He was. They didn't try and get His autograph and then go around showing people they had been with the Master. No. They followed the Master. They knew Him. They talked like Him. They acted like Him. They were as the Master.

The technician who used to work on my Xerox copier is a tall fellow of Italian descent, by the name of Antonelle. When coming for a service call, after a bit of small talk, he would ask, "What's the matter with the machine?"

As I would explain the problem, he would occasionally nod his head or maybe ask a question. The look on his face said he knew where the problem was. What followed is what set Antonelle apart from other technicians.

He would set his tool chest on the table, open it, take out a screwdriver and then begin removing the outside panels of the copier. Next he would get out his vacuum sweeper and begin cleaning the inside of the machine – normally blackened by toner (powdered ink). With quick strokes of a small brush held in one hand, he would send the toner into the vacuum hose, held in the other hand. The final step was to take a damp cloth and wipe up anything the vacuum sweeper might have missed.

Now he would go to the sink and wash out his rag with soap, thoroughly wash his

hands, and then go to work on the machine with clean hands.

His tool case was a lesson in organization. I soon learned that absolutely everything in his tool chest had a place – including the rag he used to clean the machine, which was carefully folded, placed in a plastic bag, and laid on the top shelf. As he worked, there was no hesitation, no hunting around for tools. And best of all, when he finished, the machine would work.

Through Antonelle I got a very good impression of the Xerox Company.

We often draw conclusions based on one man. A Korean comes to work in the factory where you are employed. He works in your department. You observe how he works, how he acts, what he says, and how he reacts in different situations. Although this is the only Korean you know personally, soon you are telling others what Koreans are like.

You buy a Timex watch. After a week it quits working. You tell others that Timex watches are no good.

Right or wrong, human beings generalize. And of one thing we can be absolutely positive: people watch us, listen to us, analyze us, and then say that that is what the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite is like.

And not only that. People watch us, notice how we react in different situations, and decide that that is what our God must be like. Our Master.

Some are impressed. Others aren't.

You, my brother or sister, are the image that someone has of God. As Moses was to the Egyptians, so you are to someone. When that someone thinks about God, he thinks about you. When you're way out in the middle of São Paulo all by yourself, someone may very well be watching you. You help him form a concept of what God is like. He will go home and decide if you are the kind of Master he would want to serve.

This "somebody" observes which magazines you pick up at the newsstand. He notices how you treat the clerk who waits on you. He observes when you take a few minutes to talk to an underprivileged person. He decides he would like to serve your Master.

If someone learns to know you, does he learn to know your Master too? Are you as the Master?

Large corporations are in a constant state of change. Xerox is no exception. Antonelle was replaced by another technician. Then another. And yet another. In varying degrees, they were all inferior to Antonelle.

Then one day another technician was sent out. I watched how he worked. I noticed how he laid out his tool chest on the table, the plastic bag with a rag in it, the way he first vacuumed the machine with the aid of a little brush before going to work –with clean hands–, his expertise.

Curious, I finally remarked to him, "You know something? You work just like Antonelle."

He was silent for a moment, then smiled briefly, and said, "I was his teacher." ▲

Death

Carson Dell Schmidt

Our son, Carson Dell, was born in the Evangelical Hospital, in Rio Verde – Goiás, on May 3, 1992. Due to neonatal complications, he returned to his Maker on May 5, at 3:15 p.m.

Deeply saddened by Carson's passing are: the parents, Staven & Adeline Schmidt, paternal grandparents, Earl & Johanna Schmidt, maternal grandparents, Duane & Frances Holdeman, uncles and aunts in both Brazil and the US, and other relatives.


[Based on Psalm 50]

*The mighty God,
even the Lord
Whom we serve,
He hath spoken.
Out of Zion
We have heard His voice.
Our eyes have seen His glory,
The perfection of His beauty.
Perfection?
Beauty?*

*Yes, God hath shined.
Through our little son, Carson,
God has truly shined.
Just for a few days–
Like a little candle
that flickers and dies.
But we saw his perfection.
We saw his beauty.*

*We longed to keep Carson,
To see him grow,
To watch him play.
But God said,
“Enough.
He is too perfect,
Too beautiful,
For this cold world.
I will take him home.*

*“If you would see him again,
Be perfect,
Live beautifully,
And some day – soon,
I shall again speak out of Zion,
And call you home.
Then you can be with Me,
And with Carson.
Eternally.”*



Literature Work

Proofreading Season

We have a five-man proofreading committee here in Brazil. It is their responsibility to proofread all the books or tracts that are translated. The five men are: Dan Kramer, chairman; Calvin Hibner, secretary; Dean Mininger (temporarily replaced by Leo Dirks while Dean and his family spend some time in the mission); Stephen Kramer, and Luiz Duarte. Paulo David has been invited to help during this term.

We operate under a unique system here. After I have a book or a tract translated, Faith corrects it and then copies are made and handed out to each member of the committee. At home, where it is obviously easier to concentrate, they carefully check the work, comparing it with the original. Words or sentences that they feel are incorrect, they mark with a red marker, optionally inserting what they feel would be a better reading.

Words or sentences that they feel are correct, but because of personal preferences they would like to see changed, they mark with a yellow marker.

All of their copies are then handed in to me. I lay them out side by side so that I can easily view them all, thus getting a consensus of what their feeling was. Then I correct the text, using my word processor's revision mark tool. This means that wherever I erase something, the text actually remains, but is crossed out. Anything added is underlined. In both cases, a line shows up in the left margin showing something has been changed.

When I finish making the changes suggested, a new copy is made and sent back to the proofreaders together with their original copy. They give the corrected version a quick going over to see if they are satisfied with the changes.

Usually several days later we have a meeting. In this meeting the proofreaders have the option of accepting or rejecting any corrections I made—or didn't make. We come to a conclusion on what the final text should be. I then go home and make these final corrections and ask the computer to accept all the revision marks. It automatically erases anything that has a line through it and accepts whatever is underlined. The tract or book is ready to have the type set and go to the printer.

To make the proofreading easier, each line is automatically numbered by the computer. This is a real time saver. Instead of trying to find something in the middle of the 3rd paragraph, we simply talk about page 4, line 16, for example.

For this dry season, which is the slack season for farmers, we have Conversion, Consecration and Christlike Service and Hear Their Cry to be proofread. Since Keeping the Faith is over half translated, it's very possible I will finish it so that it can be proofread too. There may be a tract or two that will be proofread.

It is extremely helpful for the translator to be able to work together with the proofreaders. We work as a team—a team that it is a pleasure to work with. ▲

This & That

May 1st is Labor Day here in Brazil, so there was no school.

Richard, Doug Ferrell's dad passed away in the US on May 4. Doug immediately left for the US. Minister Wayne Amoth, who learned to know Richard and Doug when he was here for meetings, conducted the funeral service.

The Monte Alegre Sewing Circle met on May 7. The children always enjoy these days. Jennifer, Carman and Celma's 4 year old girl ended up breaking her arm.

The Dean Penner family, stationed in the Mirassol, São Paulo mission, spent several days here when they brought their school teacher, Lucinda Martin back.

Richard Mininger and Duane & Frances Holdeman spent approximately a week in the Northeast visiting the missions.

Sheila Hibner returned from the mission in Acaraú, where she taught Arlo & Priscilla Hibner's children. Duane & Frances, the children's grandparents, were able to be in on the last day of school program.

On May 8 a joint meeting of all three congregations was held to discuss a future literature center. The idea was approved and a study committee was elected to begin gathering information. This would be for the tract, publication, and translation work.

Ileen Koehn traded her land along the Jataí highway for a piece of the former Alvin Schneider fazenda, that now belongs to Doug Ferrell. Even though the buildings weren't included in the deal, Doug has given her permission to live in them for several years, until she can build her own house.

Having left for N America this month are: The Clifford Warkentin family, the Lowell Warkentin family, the Stanley Holdeman family, and the Clinton Unruh family.

Darrin, Tim & Deanna Burns' son came to spend a month in Brazil.

Those who are familiar with this area will be acquainted with a high tension transmission line that runs through the Colony. A company man was out to get the paperwork taken care of to run another identical line along side of the first one.

On May 18 the Health Department sent personnel to our schools to vaccinate everyone between nine months and 14 years for measles.

Brazil 16 News

The Rio Verdinho School program was held on May 21. Their three graduates were: Richard Kramer, Francine Koehn, and Cleide Maia.

On May 23 was the Stuart Mininger sale. They are returning to the US. The Rio Verdinho Sewing served the lunch, with the proceeds going to the furnishing of the new social hall.

Several of the families from Goiânia, who are interested in the church, were out for the sale and spent the weekend here.

On Monday, May 25th, was the Monte Alegre School program. There were a record of 11 graduates: Barbra Dirks, Brenda Hibner, Roxanne Schultz, Raquel Garcia, Luciene Rosa, Sheila Rosa, Evandre Alves, Harley Penner, Keniomar Machado, Bira Bernardes, and Marcelo Passos.

On Tuesday, the 26th of May both schools had their play days. The Monte Alegre school served grilled chicken, with Dan Kramer and Tim Burns acting as chefs.

On May 26, Stephen and Dete had a girl, Arlene. A Kramer, yesiree.

Paul Yoder missed the playday because of getting his hand injured in a radial saw. He ended up spending four days in the hospital.

On May 27, over 20 men from the Monte Alegre Congregation got together to help Elias Stoltzfus get his field work done. Elias and his family will be spending several months in the Mirassol mission while Dean Penners are on furlough in the US.

The Mark Dirks family, from the mission in Cruz, Ceará, returned to the US. They will not be coming back to Brazil.

My luggage disappeared on my return trip from the US. About 10 days later it was found and sent out to Rio Verde. Everything was in good shape.

Jorge & Dalva, from the Rio Verde congregation had a baby on May 18. Name: Igor José. People think he's sweet.

Edna Loewen kept Doug Ferrell's children while he was in the States.

Harvest is over. It was a bumper crop. I will try and get some figures around on crop yields, prices, etc. for the next issue.

Reporters were out from the VEJA magazine. They asked the usual questions and took the usual photos. Nothing has shown up in the magazine yet.

The Colony road committee organized a workday to grade up the road from the dam to the crossroads near Carman Loewen's place. The road is considerably wider now.

Some of the Colony members went to a weekend horse auction at the King Ranch in Presidente Prudente, state of São Paulo.

Craig & Monica Redger will be spending some time in the US.