

# Brazil News

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Editorial

## Rules and Conscience

A rule is a guideline intended to modify or control behavior.

Generally speaking, most rules (laws – if you prefer) are a failure. If they weren't, by their sheer numbers, this world would surely be a utopia.

The comments which follow do not apply to society in general, but rather to those who still maintain a high standard of conduct.

Rules have little value without conscience. Conscience, on the other hand, is not a very safe guide without rules.

It isn't always easy to establish a balance between rules and conscience. There are those who see rules as a cure-all. The moment a problem arises, a new rule is suggested.

Then there are those who see rules as a plague, as a violation of the sovereignty of the conscience, which, they feel, should be directed by the Holy Spirit and not by man.

One unbalance is as bad as the other. One tends toward legalism and the other toward liberalism.

A rule is a guideline intended to modify or control behavior. This must be done through the agency of the conscience if the rule is to be successful.

Miss A teaches the third grade. Her students have the bad habit of coming to her desk anytime they please, without permission. When Katie comes to teacher's desk, without permission, while she is busy with other students, she finishes what she is doing, smiles sweetly, and says, "Katie, you forgot again, didn't you?" Katie smiles too. "Ya teacher, I did, now how do I do this problem?" This happens approximately once a period. Everyday. Before Katie goes back to her seat, Miss A smiles again and says, "Katie, please try harder to remember, OK?" Miss A's students don't take her seriously. Nor do they learn very much.

Miss B teaches the third grade. Her students have the bad habit of coming to her desk anytime they please, without permission. On the second day of school, Miss B

makes a rule: Anyone getting out of his seat without permission will stay in recess. The second time it happens will be 15 minutes in the corner, and the third time a visit to the office. Since the previous teacher permitted this, and students forget easily, visits to the office are frequent. Other rules follow. And yet others. Behavior apparently is good in Miss B's classroom, but not too much is learned. The students detest her.

Miss C teaches the third grade. Her students have the bad habit of coming to her desk anytime they please, without permission. It is disturbing, so one morning after devotions she says, "Class, what happens if your daddy doesn't stop at a stop sign and a policeman is around?" ("He gets a ticket!" "My dad got a ticket!" "Mine did too! My mom didn't think it was funny.") "OK, we've got a problem here with students getting out of their seat without permission. This disturbs the whole class, doesn't it? (Explains why) Now, you know that cops sometimes give a warning ticket, so during this week, anyone getting out of his seat without permission will get a warning ticket. But, next week, you'll have to stay in 15 minutes each time it happens. And your mom isn't going to think this is funny either."

The first week quite a few warning tickets are given. The next week six students have to stay in. The third week only two. After that Miss C's students no longer have the bad habit of coming to her desk any time they please without permission. Her students love her.

Why do Miss C's students love her? Because she understands that for a rule to work, it must become a conscience matter.

A rule is like a cast that a doctor puts on a broken arm or leg. It is needed only while the bone is mending. When a cast must be worn indefinitely, either the doctor or the patient has a serious problem. Maybe both.

A rule is a guideline intended to modify or control behavior. One of the most beautiful and impressive examples of this principle is a rule made quite a few years back in General Conference, at the time when the radio first came on the scene, prohibiting its use in the Church. Immediately a conscience began to develop on the matter. Years later when television – infinitely worse – became available, no rule was made. No rule was needed.

Why? Because the first rule, like a cast, set the conscience. That cast is no longer needed. Yes, the rule remains in the books, but for all practical purposes it no longer exists.

Care must be taken that rules be short and clear. A long rule normally is a poor rule. When a rule is made by a deliberative body – as opposed to a teacher or parent, for example – there is the constant temptation of making a vague rule. A rule that can be read several ways.

Several years ago when writing a new Constitution, Brazilian lawmakers became deadlocked on a number of sensitive issues. One was the interest problem. The left wanted a clause in the Constitution that would prohibit financial institutions from charging more than 12% per year. The right didn't accept this view. Finally a compromise was reached. The 12% clause was written into the Constitution, but it

wasn't defined what interest was. That was to be decided later by Congress. To this day banks charge what they feel the traffic will bear. If time goes on another hundred years, I don't expect Congress to ever decide what interest is.

When a rule is made in which both sides can sing victory, it reeks of politics. (Obviously this doesn't refer to a situation in which the loser gracefully accepts the decision, and so can be counted a victor.)

A good rule should have a short life. A good rule must have a short life. This doesn't mean that after six months we burn our rule books, but rather that as rules are made, we commit them to conscience. Once a rule becomes a conscience matter, for all practical purposes, it no longer exists.

Do we need rules? Sure we do. Until they set the conscience. ▲

## Politics & Economy

### Who'll Be Left?

In one of the ironies of politics, Collor was elected president on an anti-corruption platform. As it turns out, it wasn't that Collor wanted to do away with corruption, or that he harbored any moralist ideas. It was simply that it was a product he could sell to voters. And it worked. He became president.

PC Farias, an ex-seminary student, who had hoped to become a priest, instead became Collor's campaign manager. Certainly he was well prepared for this position – and especially for what followed after his boss was elected president.

As the pieces of the puzzle fall into place, it becomes evident that Collor was as corrupt as the worst. However, due to his campaign promises to put all marajás (high level crooks) in jail, Collor had to put on a good front.

And yet Collor had great plans on how to become rich(er) while in the presidency. Now is where PC really began to shine. As Collor's henchman, he did his job well.

In the last several weeks we have been finding out what was going on behind the scenes. Brasília was host to two rival gangs of extortioners. One was led by federal congressman João Alves. The other by PC Farias.

What it boiled down to was that contractors bidding on government projects – highways, hydroelectric dams, etc. – had to up their bid by at least 20 percent to cover kickbacks reserved for those responsible for getting them the job.

When, as mentioned last month, José Carlos dos Santos, a career bureaucrat and ex-director of the federal Budget Department, was arrested on charges of having murdered his wife, he decided to blow his whistle. It may well turn out to be the whistle heard round the world. This was act one.

Now comes act two. Approximately four months ago, after the court ordered his arrest, PC disappeared. A month ago he was spotted in England. Again he disappeared. A week ago he resurfaced in Thailand. Authorities there arrested him because of an

expired tourist visa, and have promised to hand him over to the Brazilian government. Diplomats from both countries are working on his extradition.

PC Farias has promised to do the same thing João Carlos dos Santos did. Talk. PC's wife has said that her husband is the largest walking file in Brazil on high level corruption.

If PC keeps his word, Brazil will never be the same. Neither will he.

Marcelo Pontes, a political commentator, ended up one of his columns saying, "All this is coming to light because Brazil is now a democracy."

True.

I must retell the political cartoon that appeared in the paper when Collor was still president. Both he and PC are shown in a prison cell – PC on the top bunk and Collor on the bottom. Looking over the edge, PC remarks, "Collor, you took yourself too seriously when you said you would put all crooks in jail." ▲

## A Brazilian Story

### **O Gozador**

[Mário Moraes tells this story. A gozador is someone who habitually makes fun of others, often maliciously. I haven't been able to find a good similar term in English.]

Even though the Paulistano [São Paulo resident] Joaquim Pinto da Silva declares that this is a true story, I first heard it as a joke. But not to disappoint him, I'm going to print it anyway. It's not unusual, over a period of time, for actual happenings to turn into jokes.

Conrado was the owner of a prosperous barber shop on Consolação Street, in the city of São Paulo. He had three other barbers who worked for him. Unfortunately the barbers he hired worked for him for only a short time. Most of them quit after being on the job for several months. This was because of Romeu, the barber who had worked for Conrado the longest. He had the defect of constantly making fun of his co-workers.

All it took was for one of them to make some little mistake. Immediately Romeu would begin making fun, keeping it up for days on end. It wouldn't quit until the other one finally decided to leave. Conrado didn't have the slightest idea of how to break Romeu of this bad habit. He had talked with him different times about it, but nothing did any good.

Conrado thought about firing him, but because of the labor benefits he would have to pay him, decided to leave things as they were. Finally the owner of the barber shop realized why his worker acted like he did. Romeu had a lot of good customers and didn't want anyone to stay long enough to end up with some of them. So, every time someone showed signs of being a really good barber, he got rid of him with all of his tasteless jokes.

But then there came a Saturday that changed Romeu for the rest of his life. The barber shop was packed, when a very dignified customer came in. His clothes showed he was a man of wealth. He was holding onto a little boy's hand. Looking at Romeu, the gentleman asked, "Are there many ahead of me?"

Seeing that this was the type of customer who usually left a hefty tip, Romeu replied, "In just a moment I can take care of you."

Quickly he finished up the customer who was on the chair. Then, acting as though he had forgotten that there were a number of others in line ahead of the newcomer, Romeu asked him to be seated on the chair.

"What will it be, doctor?" [The term doctor used to be used extensively as a term of respect. It still is sometimes.]

"The whole works." These magical words indicated the gentleman wanted a shampoo, shave, haircut – everything. It also meant there would be a tip that would make it all very worthwhile.

"And the boy, what will it be for him?"

"A haircut. You can do his after you finish mine."

Now Romeu knew he had it made. This would add substance to the tip. He did his very best as he cut the gentleman's hair.

When he finished, the gentleman got off the chair and the boy got on. "While you cut his hair, I'll buy myself a pack of cigarettes and be right back."

"That will be fine, doctor. I'll take good care of your son while you're gone."

When he finished cutting the boy's hair, his dad hadn't returned, so the barber said, "Sit down over there and wait for your dad."

"For my dad? What dad?" the boy asked with a perplexed look.

"Sure, your dad. The gentleman who brought you here," answered Romeu, with just a trace of worry in his voice.

"He's not my dad!"

Then came the last straw. "That man saw me playing out on the street. He wanted to know if I didn't want a haircut. I told him I did and he asked me to come with him...."

Obviously the gentleman didn't leave to buy cigarettes. By now he was who knows where. Beside doing two haircuts for nothing, Romeu never heard the last of that one.

The owner of the shop was more than happy with what happened. After that, never again did Romeu give any of the other barbers a rough time. ▲

## Education

### Math

Our church schools are no longer mutations of the system we left. We are rapidly developing our own methods and goals. We are establishing our own identity. This is tremendous.

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One area that needs to be put high on our priority list is the developing of our own text and work books – at least in certain subjects. At the best this will be slow. Unless we make this a heartfelt priority, we're going to be dependent on outside publishers for a long time. To develop from scratch and publish our own material is a Herculean task. But we can do it. We have the necessary talent.

As we develop our own books, we shouldn't hesitate to innovate. In other words, the books we produce shouldn't be mere adaptations of existing material. They should, as our schools, have a distinctive flavor.

A good place to get started would be with math books.

It can be argued that math is math, that what was good 20 years ago is good today. But it can also be argued that the world has changed tremendously in the last 20 years. Both are true.

Let's begin with a question. In the last five years, how many long multiplication or division problems have you done on paper? I'm talking about the kind that can take five minutes or more, like, 427,139.24 divided by 774.6. I doubt if any you readers average one such problem a year. And yet, for those who went to school 20, 40, or 60 years ago, this was essential.

Not only was it essential to know how to do long multiplication or division, but it had to be done accurately. A wrong answer can be quite expensive in real life. So a lot of blood, sweat, tears and toil went into becoming proficient at solving these problems.

Today, like it or not, the omnipresent little pocket calculator has become part of our brain. If we, who didn't grow up with part of our brain in our pocket or purse, are now totally addicted to them, is it reasonable to believe our children will be any different?

This being the case, just what do we have to gain by having them spend hours and days learning how to accurately do long multiplication and division problems on paper? It makes as much sense as Dad saying, "Son, if you're going to be a safe driver behind the wheel of a car, you must first learn how to handle a horse and buggy." Humbuggy. Entirely too much time is being wasted on exactly this.

However, the day comes when the child is able to divide 427,139.24 by 774.6. And get the right answer. Now he hits another problem in his math book: Farmer Brown took 24 dozen eggs to town and sold them for 50 cents a dozen. He bought a sack of chicken feed for eight dollars. How much money did he bring home?

The answer comes back \$66. Simple.  $24 \times 50 = 74$ .  $74 - 8 = 66$ .

When you get right down to it, the reason we study math is to be able to figure things out. It's possible to know how to do enormous multiplication and division problems, know how to add long columns of numbers, and yet not know how to figure out a simple little problem. We end up, if we're not careful, with expert buggy drivers who can't handle a car.

To know what a child should learn in school, we need to stop and think what we use most – or wish we could. Let's notice:

- The ability to make rapid mental calculations. To figure in the head, like is said. Here in Brazil much of our economy is based on the dollar, but expressed in cruzeiros.

Many times the only way to know if something is a good deal, it's necessary to make a rapid mental calculation. Is Cr\$1,199 an outrageous price for a box of cereal? The exchange rate is 236 cruzeiros to the dollar. How many times does 236 go into 1,199? Approximately 5. The box of cereal costs about five dollars. You decide it's too expensive.

- The ability to use formulas. How do you find the area of a circle? How do you find the volume of a cylinder? How much ground do you cover with your combine with an 18 foot header in a quarter of a mile? You now need the part of the brain that you carry in your shirt pocket or purse. But even it does no good if you don't know the formula.

- The ability to figure out complicated problems. It's the real life version of the 24-dozen-eggs,-one sack-of-feed problem – only much more complicated and involving a lot of variables.

What we are proposing here involves no new theory or method, but merely a change of thrust. Much of the book would involve story problems. In fact, some of them could be fairly long involving a number of variables, as happens in real life. Flash cards would be used a lot to develop lightning responses to multiplication, addition and subtraction problems. Special flash cards would be made in which the child would have to give the formula on how to find the area of a circle, the volume of a tank, etc. etc. The student would be taught to do these calculations on a calculator and mentally, by estimation.

To keep the students attention, this math should circle around an imaginary community, which would include a farm, a little town with different stores, and other real life stage fixtures. Mr. Nelson would be owner of the hardware store. Mrs. Jones would run the bakery. Mr. Smith the grocery store...

### **Lesson 27 might be something like this:**

When Sammy woke up Saturday morning, he heard the rain beating against his window pane. It wasn't a gentle rain, but really a gusher.

Dressing, Sammy ran downstairs to where his parents were sitting around the table talking. "Talking about a rain!" he heard his Dad exclaim. "It's already rained a hundred millimeters." Turning to Sammy, Daddy said, "Now, Son, if it's rained one hundred millimeters, how many liters has it rained in our back yard?"

"Liters? What do you mean?"

"Just that. You never thought that by knowing how many millimeters it rains you can figure out in your head how many liters it's rained in our back yard, have you?"

"No I haven't."

"OK, the first thing you have to figure out is how big our back yard is."

"How do I do that?"

"I'll give you a hint. The fence posts are one and a half meters apart.... [Sammy figures out how many square meters there are in the back yard.]

"OK Dad, there are 150 square meters in the back yard. Now what?"

"It's rained one hundred millimeters. That means that if the water hadn't run off, it would be one hundred millimeters deep on the level – ten centimeters, if you prefer.

It's the same thing. The next step will be to figure out how many cubic centimeters of water there are in the back yard. How do you do that?"

"Let me see. Length times width times height. Where's my calculator?"

"Forget your calculator. You can figure this without it. Length times width is 150, right? It has rained 10 centimeters, which is 1/10th of a meter. So what is 150 times 0.10? Or looking at it another way, what is 1/10th of 150?"

"It's 15, isn't it? Fifteen cubic meters of water."

"Right on. Now, how many liters of water has it rained in our back yard?"

"Let me see. If I knew how many liters there were in a cubic meter of water, I would have the answer.... Hey! I remember. It's a thousand. Right Dad?"

"Right."

"OK, 15 times a thousand is 15 thousand. Is that right?"

"Exactly."

Now the book goes into variables. Each child is asked to calculate the size of his back yard and find out how many liters would come down in a 25 mm rain, etc.

[In countries where the metric system isn't used yet, these calculations will be a lot more complicated.]

Now folks, is there any reason why we can't make ourselves a good functional math book, based on plain old common sense? ▲

## History of the Colony

### **A Terrible Blow**

Monday, March 19, 73 – The day Pete Loewen and Denton Burns were killed in an automobile accident and Chris Stoltzfus critically injured.

To understand better the impact this tragedy had on the little group here, it must be remembered that the Colony had been in existence for less than four years and Rio Verde was still a very backwoodish place. The road to Goiânia was dirt. Depending on the weather, it could take four or five hours, or even more, to drive the 135 miles between Rio Verde and Goiânia. For all practical purposes we had no telephone communications with the outside world. Emergency situations were handled by the police short band radio. Also, we had never had a death on the Colony before, and thus were caught totally unprepared.

What really complicated matters, however, was the fact that Denton and Pete were exactly the ones who solved all unexpected problems. They were the ones who would take time off to help others with their problems. Finally there was the endless red tape that had to be cut so that permanent visas could be properly processed, land contracts registered, etc. When something new turned up, everyone instinctively looked to these two to take the lead.

We now backtrack to March 13. Back those days it was possible to come to Brazil on



a tourist visa and from this end begin the process for getting a permanent visa. That is what the Chris Stoltzfus and Fanny Kramer families from Ohio were doing at this time. While totally legal, it was quite a hassle to get everything in order. In their case it was necessary to spend a few days in Brasília working on documents. Since money was scarce, Pete offered to rig up a tarp over the back of his truck and take the two families to Brasília. They would simply live on the back of his truck while working on their documents.

That is what they did, which is a story all of its own.

On March 17, on the way back, Chris lost the pouch in which he had his money and documents – including what was needed for immigration. Needless to say, this was most unfortunate.

It was decided that an effort should be made to find the pouch. It was possible it had been left at one of the places where they stopped on the way back from Brasília. And if that was the case, it would be almost impossible for the person who found it to let us know, because of communications problems, already described.

On Monday, March 19, Pete, Denton, and Chris left in Pete's VW bug, to see if they could find any trace of the lost pouch. Near Goiânia the road was under construction and all traffic was detoured onto some sideroads. It was near the little town of Santa Bárbara that a truck, trying to pass another vehicle, struck the bug head-on.

This happened towards evening. We have few details of what happened in the next hours.

Tuesday, March 20 – Life began normally here on the Colony. No one had any inkling of events taking place in Goiânia. In town different ones knew of the accident – very likely by radio. One of these was a young doctor just out of medical school who was putting in some time at the Hospital Evangélico, one of our local hospitals. Since Charlene Loewen (now Souto) – Pete's daughter – worked in the hospital, he told her that some Americans from Rio Verde had been in an accident near Goiânia. They came out and told Edna, Pete's wife that there had been an accident. At this point no one knew (or didn't tell) the seriousness of the accident.

Two young lawyers, who both worked together with our lawyer, Dr. Jerônimo Carmo de Moraes, knew about the accident too. They decided to drive out to the Colony and make sure people knew.

In retrospect, it's hard to believe how slow we were to react here on the Colony. Not knowing the Brazilian culture very well yet, we didn't realize it was custom – this has changed a lot since then – to minimize as much as possible any accident or tragedy, when breaking the news to relatives or interested persons.

One of the first concrete indications of the seriousness of the accident was when Faith and Clara Miller stopped at a business place and the owner (a brother to Aristote Mesquita, from whom Pete and Reno bought their places) remarked, "It sure is too bad about those two Americans who got killed."

Incredibly, at this point some didn't even know who the three were that had been involved in the accident. This was because Jake (Pete's brother) and Mark (Pete's son) had also gone to Goiânia. More on that in just a bit.

A small group formed in town: Mom, Edna Loewen and Edna Stoltzfus, the wives of the victims, Charlene and Faith. Of the Colony men, only Reno and Carman, Pete's son, were present.

The little group ended up at a house or business where they had some sort of radio. I don't know if it was a ham operator, or what kind of a setup it was. Apparently they had gotten word that someone should fly to Goiânia immediately and identify the bodies. Then more information came in. Pete's son, they said, had identified the bodies, and they would be flown out. It was here for the first time that it was confirmed that the fatal victims were Pete and Denton. Chris was in critical condition.

Edna Stoltzfus was taken to the bus station to catch a bus to Goiânia to be with Chris, who was in critical condition. This was a real act of bravery, as she knew no Portuguese. However – and if you will remember in a previous article, I mentioned how very helpful the Arabs in town are – a local Arab businessman was on the same bus. When he found out what was up, he promised to see to it that Edna got to the hospital once they got to Goiânia.

We now must backtrack approximately a week. Jake Loewen was hauling some empty rice bags on his truck near Goiânia. At a check station, he was asked for a document to prove the sacks were really his. Not having any, they simply impounded his truck.

Jake asked Mark – who by now spoke Portuguese – to help him get his truck out of hock. At a filling station in Goiânia, someone asked them if they knew the Americans who had been injured in a wreck. Apparently they even told them in which hospital the men were.

Jake and Mark headed out to the hospital. When they arrived, they were told where Pete and Denton were. But they weren't told they were both dead. I almost said, "Imagine how they felt when they opened the door..." but that wouldn't be proper. It is impossible to imagine what Mark and Jake felt when they saw their dad and brother, and Denton, dead. The bodies hadn't even been cleaned up yet. In this state of shock they had to make a number of decisions on what should be done next.

We must at this point remember that embalming wasn't – and isn't – practiced in Brazil, except in very rare cases – usually on foreigners who are to be buried in their homeland. It also must be remembered that Brazil is a tropical country and that by the law of the land, bodies must be buried within 24 hours. By the law of nature, however, 24 hours sometimes creates an uncomfortable situation.

Now we come to Dr. Jerônimo, our lawyer, and Dr. Eurípedes, the chief of the passport office of the Federal Police in Goiânia. Not only were we good friends to both, but they were good friends. Dr. Jerônimo happened to be in Goiânia at the time of the accident.

I'm not sure what all they did. Apparently they both dropped what they were doing and went to work. It is said – I'm not sure about it – that it was Dr. Jerônimo who went to the hospital and told them to embalm the bodies. Had he not done this, both Pete and Denton would have been buried in the Goiânia cemetery, by the city, in rough coffins, as the 24 hour period was expiring.

Back to Rio Verde. The little group was told that the bodies would be flown in. After waiting at the airport for several hours, they went to the hospital to see if they had any information. Here they were told the bodies would be coming out by hearse. So the group returned to the Colony.

As word got around, the Colony mobilized and began preparing for the arrival of the bodies.

Around 2:00 that morning we saw lights coming down the hill. Two vehicles, the hearse and Dr. Jerônimo and his wife in the other, leading the way.

I will never forget what Dr. Jerônimo looked like when he got out of his car. He has a very light complexion and silvery hair. Both he and his wife, as well as the driver of the hearse, were red. They were covered with dust after driving over a hundred and fifty miles on dirt roads.

Out of sheer ignorance we made a terrible mistake. Knowing the bodies were embalmed, we assumed this would give us at least several days time before burial. We didn't know that when done in a hospital, under this kind of circumstances, it is a very precarious job, meant to give another 12 hours time at the most, when the body must be transported.

Remember, they died Monday towards evening. By the time the bodies arrived, more than 30 hours had gone by. Instead of having the funeral by noon the next day, at the very latest, as we should have, we set it for Thursday.

One of the most beautiful aspects of this whole tragedy was the way Rio Verde responded. I mentioned that we had been here less than four years. I doubt that very many places in the world would do what the people of Rio Verde did.

In a previous article I told of how it used to be custom, when someone died, to have little pieces of paper printed up and distributed throughout the town, inviting everyone to the funeral. This is what Eurico Veloso, the mayor of Rio Verde did – in his name – inviting everyone to the funeral. In addition to this, he paid a car with a loudspeaker on top to slowly drive up and down the streets announcing Denton and Pete's death. This custom prevails until this day. First a funeral dirge is played and then a grave, solemn voice announces who died and when the funeral will be.

In the tropical heat, the bodies didn't keep and on Wednesday the coffins had to be closed.

Through this all there was a steady stream of visitors from town and from the neighboring fazendas.

Our cemetery had been staked out, but we had never really given serious thought to what we would need in the case of a funeral. Now we suddenly realized that we needed some concrete slabs to cover the vault that was laid up with bricks and plastered. Once again the mayor came to our rescue and brought us what we needed.

Thursday morning was the funeral. The bodies were taken directly to the cemetery and placed beside the open graves.

I believe that never has there been a similar funeral in the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite. People came in cars, jeeps, VW buses, trucks, walking, on bikes, by horse

and cart, on horseback, and yes, by plane. Otis & Betty Hostetler, the Old Mennonite missionaries from Brasília who ran the bookstore, came out on the mission plane.

The mayor was there as well as other politicians. There were doctors and lawyers. There were rich and poor. There were school teachers and illiterate. There were Protestants, Spiritists, and Catholics, including a priest and several nuns.

Possibly the most ringing testimony came from the priest. I don't know how many times he told us afterwards, when we would meet in town, what a beautiful service it had been. His words were, "I could just feel the presence of God there."

The death of these two men was a terrible blow to the Colony. They made a real team. Denton, who by now spoke Portuguese reasonably well, was the trouble shooter, the go-between, the expert on almost anything that could possibly turn up. Pete, who spoke very little Portuguese, was the man who made things happen. If someone needed help, you could count on Pete. Put the two men together, and things happened.

### **Pete**

I think it was once when Pete and I were traveling together, he started telling me of all the vehicles he had owned in his life. He did it in chronological order. Understand, I'm not mechanically minded and there are very few details I remember about the cars I have owned in the past. But when Pete told me about his cars, I sort of fell into a trance.

He told me the year and model of the car, what kind of motor it had, why it was special (overhead cam, what ever that is), what kind of transmission, from whom he bought it, what he paid for it, what he did to it, what it did for him, and finally what he sold it for.

Enter car number two. The same story, except that this time he jerked the motor and put a Mercedes or whatever motor in it, he put in an automatic transmission, changed the rear end, etc. etc.

Car number three, car number four... That man must have owned dozens and dozens of cars in his life. He could give the life's history of each one, at least while in his care. Each one seemed to have something special about it.

A kombi is supposed to haul a ton at the most, and that on good roads. One day when coming home from town (or going, I don't remember which), I met Pete parked along side the road. His kombi had a flat tire. The jack just wasn't lifting the load. In almost hushed tones he informed me that "the thing has two tons of seed rice in it." So what if the jack didn't lift it? That was one for the record books.

Pete didn't know much Portuguese, but he could talk with Brazilians a lot better than some people who know the language a heap sight better. Pete talked heart language and to this day people remember him for it.

### **Denton**

Dad-in-law was a carpenter. It wasn't unusual to come into the house and see him at his desk in deep concentration. With his drawing instruments he would carefully design a piece of furniture.

What I never got tired of watching was when he went to his shop and began work. He would make sure all his tools were there, that his saw blade was sharp. Now, consulting the print he had drawn up, he began to cut pieces of wood. As he cut them, he would identify them with his carpenter's pencil and neatly stack them.

Then, when all the pieces were cut, came the best part. He would get out his glue bottle, glue the joints, and put them together. What I could never get over is that everything fit. It was sort of like building Solomon's temple. There was a time to cut and a time to assemble. He didn't have to go back and cut just a bit more off, or junk a piece because it was too short.

I'm sure Dad-in-law enjoyed seeing all the pieces fit. But I soon learned there was something he enjoyed even more. He liked to help others with their problems. His speciality was making pieces fit. He would carefully study their problem, decide on the best course of action, and then go to work.

He was tremendously interested in the development of the Colony. As we bought land, the price slowly crept up. I remember how unhappy he was when someone paid 30 dollars an acre, if I'm not mistaken. He felt that was setting a precedent that would create problems in the future. What would he say today, with land prices practically the same as in some areas of N America?

He enjoyed helping others find land. Several days before the accident he took a kombi load of men to Montividiu – a neighboring town – to look at some land. The road was nothing more than two tracks, filled with water in the lower spots because of a recent rain.

Dad-in-law was so busy talking that often he forgot to move over a couple of feet to ride the ridge. Once when we got to a particularly long stretch of water, he remembered to ride the ridge. I said, "Hey! You missed that one." Just that quick he steered into the ruts and sent water flying way up in the air the entire length of the mudhole.

He kept right on talking. ▲

## **This & That**

Two adorable babies were born on or near the Colony during the month of November.

Jon & Leila Coblentz had a boy, Justin Rodrigo. Jorge & Dalva Silva had a boy, Werner Jorge. Both were born on the 8th. I have seen neither.

On November 9 the Monte Alegre youth spent the afternoon cleaning the church and the church yard.

On the 13th the John Unruh family and Karla Holdeman went to Mato Grosso, to Vinagre where the Dirkses live, to pay them a visit. A staff member tries to pay them a visit every two months, I think. I hope it's enough.

Wilmar, a young man from Patos, Ceará where we have our mission, is spending some time here. He went to São Paulo to find work, but found it wasn't as easy as he thought it might be.

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John & Sheila Kramer have set up temporary housekeeping on the Kramer land in Mato Grosso. They're supposed to be living in a tent, or something similar. Glenn and Roger Hibner hauled two of their tractors down there so that they would have something to do.

This is a rough one. Do I list who went to Conference? Or who didn't? Anyway, here they are: Edna, Maxine and Keleda Loewen, Frances Schultz, Duane & Frances Holdeman, Daniel & Betty Martin, Will & Ann Miller, Stan & Mary Schultz, Mark Loewen, Paul & Rachel Yoder, Clifford & Naomi Warkentin, Dan Kramer, Earl & Johanna Schmidt, Cláudio & Susan Silva, Myron Kramer, Harold & Irene Holdeman, Elias Stoltzfus, Errol & Karen Redger, Dean & Esther Mininger, Carman & Celma Loewen.

I read in the paper the other day that Varig and Trans-Brasil airlines are looking for ways of pulling out of their slump. It looks like they found at least one way.

We Colony folks here in Brazil have some of the most amazing eyesight you have ever seen in your life. I have told you before that we are right under the São Paulo – Miami air route, so we see a lot of big jets flying over. Anyway, the other night at a big Burns churrasco, someone said that someone said he watched a big Boeing for 30 minutes from the time it first came into view until it disappeared on the horizon. Now folks, get out your calculators and figure it out. If that jet was flying 500 miles an hour (very likely a lot faster), then during 30 minutes it would fly 250 miles. That means that it was 125 miles away when it was sighted. And 125 miles away when it disappeared in the tropical horizon. So, someone from the American Colony in Brazil, visiting McPherson, Kansas, for example, would be able to see jets while yet in Oklahoma airspace and keep an eye on them until they disappear into Nebraska. Even I have trouble swallowing this one.

Daniel & Anna Kramer made a quick trip to the US to attend her mother's funeral.

Karla Holdeman is helping in the Goiânia mission. The missionaries, Cameron & Deb Goertzen had an adorable girl on the 25th. Gayla. I didn't see her.

Darrin & Ramona Schultz from Hesston are here to spend a short time with his folks.

The Bradley Koehn family from Western Kansas are here to adopt a nine year old girl.

Right now they are putting in the 30 day bonding period required by law. Once that is over, the judge sets the date for the hearing. Since our legal system goes on vacation during the month of January, this probably will run into February. In that case they will return to the US and come and pick her up once everything is finalized.

Several weeks ago the Children's Counsel in town called and said they had a four year old boy who needed a home. Several days later Bradley called and said that if we could find them a little boy too, they would be interested. We went in, picked up the little boy, and asked the lawyer to begin adoption procedures. He is now with Brads. We hope this one will work out too, although it's too early to make any predictions.

Our rains came early this year. So farmers planted their corn early. It came up and soon it quit raining. Everywhere you went, the weather was the talk of the town. Even in

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town. After several weeks of that, it began to rain again. Not a lot, but enough to keep the crops going. Now soybeans are planted. Most places could still use a little more rain, but even so, crops are looking real good. Has the dry weather hurt crops very much on the Colony? According to what most farmers say, not very much, if any. Harvest will tell the story.

I am translating the book *The Shining Sword* in the *Mensageiro* in serialized form. The readers love it. If you haven't read this book, read it.