

Brazil News



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Editorial

Remember... Before the Silver Cord Is Snapped

Realizing things were not as they should be in his life, a young man lay awake one night. Towering waves washed over his soul. The pounding of the surf told him the reefs were anxiously awaiting their prey. When it seemed the anchor cable must surely break, the storm suddenly subsided.

Later on, telling this experience to a group of men, he mentioned at what exact hour of the night the storm lost its force. Hearing this, one of the listeners in a quite voice said, "That is when I prayed for you."

Someone remembered to pray and the silver cord didn't snap.

Many stories don't end like this. We know our brother is going through a struggle. When we remember, we don't have time. And when we have time, we don't remember. So all alone he faces the storm. The anchor cable grows tauter and tauter. Finally it snaps.

He has no experience to tell. He merely shrugs his shoulders the following day and announces he has come to the conclusion that Christian life isn't for him.

No one remembered and the silver cord snapped.

And the golden bowl is broken

Approximately eighty years ago in the state of Idaho, there was an Italian by the name of Tony. His job in a logging camp was to spread just the right amount of sand in the frozen ruts, so that the sleds, laden with logs, would come down the hill slowly.

Tony was famous for two things: For his terrible disposition and for his dedication to his job.

Nothing was known of Tony. No one remembered ever seeing him smile on the job. While he spoke English poorly, he swore fluently. He made no attempt to be civil.

When the camp superintendent asked a 20 year old employee to temporarily fill in

for him, a plan began to form in the young man's mind. His very first action would be to fire Tony, whom he detested.

One of the older employees, reading the youth's mind, called him aside. He put in a good word for Tony. His was the most dangerous hill, and yet since it had become his responsibility, never had there been an accident.

The temporary boss, while young in years, proved to possess a great deal of common sense. Going straight to Tony, he informed him, "I'm boss here today. You know that, don't you?" (A grunt.) "I had full intentions of firing you." (Another grunt.) "But I'm not going to." (An inquisitive look.) The young boss then proceeded to tell Tony what his co-worker, with whom he had worked for eight years, had to say about him.

When he finished, Tony's face was streaked with tears. Struggling to control himself, he asked, "Why he no tell me dat eight year 'go?"

The transformation in Tony was immediate. If he worked well before, he now worked doubly well.

That very evening, accepting an invitation to have supper with Tony in his mountain log cabin, the "boss" discovered a warm hearted father, revered by his wife and four children.

A close friendship developed between Tony and his "boss." Their trails separated for many years, until one day, when by chance they met again. Tony was now the superintendent of railroad construction for a prestigious logging firm. During their conversation, Tony said, "If it no be for dat one minute you talka to me back in Idaho, I keel somebody someday. One minute – she change my whole life."

Yes, the golden bowl almost broke. Had it not been for the wisdom of a young man who took just one minute, Tony's story certainly would have had a different ending. For lack of just one minute, how many golden bowls – golden lives – aren't smashed? One minute can make an eternity of difference.

Before the pitcher is shattered at the spring

When we first moved to Brazil, our drinking water came from a spring running several hundred feet from our house. We made a path through the marsh and laid some logs over the spring, where we could kneel down and fill our containers with water.

The spring was deep, swift and pure – possibly some of the purest water in the world. To walk down to the spring and draw out sparkling pure water was much more of a pleasure than it was a chore.

Today many souls are thirsty. They believe there is a fount of living water. Yet how many times, as they kneel to fill their pitcher, doesn't it shatter? Yes, they try to put pure water into a cracked pitcher. When it shatters some are devastated. They become convinced this isn't what they were looking for.

Others we see stumbling about, cradling the handle of their shattered pitcher. They say they have been to the spring. They believe they no longer thirst. They become convinced that this is Christian life.

Oh, the shattered pitchers people carry about! Relics that hold no water.

Do we remember to tell them that unless they receive a new pitcher, they can in no wise enter into the kingdom of God?

And the wheel broken at the well

Anyone who has drawn water from a hand-dug well knows the value of a wheel, or pulley, as we say today. Especially in deeper wells, it is tremendously difficult – and dangerous – to draw water without the aid of a wheel.

Yet many Christians scattered over the face of the world are having to do just that. Alone, without the help of husband or wife, children or parents, brothers or sisters, they must draw water from the well without a wheel. Without a church and fellowship, they with bloodied hands must struggle to acquire that which is handed to us on a silver tray.

For lack of a wheel, many end up dying of thirst.

What can we do to be to them what Jesus is to us: a mother, a brother and a sister? Can we be a wheel to those who struggle alone?

Maybe. For a number of years Gospel Tract in Brazil has been sending a subscription of our Portuguese Mensageiro to those who seem to show a genuine interest in salvation. There have been results. Today we have members in the church who were nourished on this little paper until it became possible to make contact with them. By letters we receive from people whom we have never met, we believe they are managing to survive spiritually.

There is an enormous gap between the tract and the missionary. The function of the tract is to lead men to the fountains of living water. Doubtlessly many thousands have been saved through this worthy effort. Yet, by its very nature, a tract is limited in what it can do, its specialty being obstetrics, not pediatrics.

We need stationary missionaries, whose job would be to correspond with those who receive our tracts, who show real interest – especially those who show evidence of an experience of new birth – but cannot be reached by a missionary. A mail order pediatrician, he would answer questions, give advise, encourage, and – yes – have a monthly or bi-monthly publication at his disposal to send to those who now must draw water without a wheel.

Think about that.

Before the dust returns to the earth as it began

There's an old saying, "You can't go back home." This, of course, refers to those who have lived in a different state or country for a number of years without returning home. Upon returning, they find things are not as they left them. People are missing. Houses are gone. Trees have been uprooted. With each passing year a part of our old home crumbles away.

When I had an English school in Rio Verde over 20 years ago, one of my most outstanding students was a young military man. One day he invited my family to have dinner at his house. We hadn't been there long when he asked me to accompany him to the corner store. There he asked the proprietor to play a record. He wanted me to write down the words.

The song, sung in Spanish by a Cuban exile, told of his longing to return home.

During the chorus, as the music faded into the background, the Cuban made a short, poignant declamation in English. I remember only one short phrase. Dreaming out load of the day he, as an older man, would be able to return to his home, he said, "...and walk where I used to run."

As we run, dust is rapidly returning to the earth. We need to walk more. We need to look up our old school teacher and say, "Thank you for what you did for me," before they return to the earth. We need to pay our aged pastor a visit and say, "Thank you for being my guide." We need to pay our aged uncles and aunts a visit and say, "Thank you for being my uncle, or aunt. It has meant a lot to me."

When we walk where we used to run, a lot of the dust has returned to the earth.

We don't have to make a long speech to show others we appreciate them. When we say, "Thank you for what you have done for me," the background music tells what we are unable to express in words.

And the spirit returns to God who gave it

That's us. After our spirit has fled, we can do none of the above. ▲

[Acknowledgments:

Remember him before the silver cord is snapped and the golden bowl is broken, before the pitcher is shattered at the spring and the wheel broken at the well, before the dust returns to the earth as it began and the spirit returns to God who gave it. – Ecclesiastes 12:6-7 (The New English Bible).

My thanks to Jake Loewen for having some time ago read to us as a family, the story of Tony out of the April 1949 Reader's Digest.

And to Ike Loewen, who during their revival meetings came to me before church one evening and with urgency in his voice said, "Charlie, I have a story that you have to publish." It was the same story Jake had read to me. I explained that because of copyright laws I couldn't publish the story.

Later, when I remembered the verse in Ecclesiastes, which for some time I used on my computer screen saver, I realized there was no law that could keep me from retelling Tony's story.]

Brasília

FHC and URV

[Articles appearing under the heading Brasília will deal with national affairs.]

Fernando Henrique Cardoso – FHC – is our finance minister. And our de facto president. He gets 50% of the blame for anything that goes wrong in our economy, and

100% of the credit if things go well. The president gets the other 50% of the blame if things go badly, but none of the credit.

Much of FHC's success can be attributed to his ability to work with congress. Traditionally the executive and legislative branches of Brazilian government refuse to work together. Under our old constitution the president had powers to make decrees, which were sent to congress for approval. If congress did nothing for 30 days, the decree automatically became law, which is usually what happened.

Under our present constitution this is no longer possible. Now the president, or rather his minister, comes up with the plan and presents it to congress for approval.

FHC's plan is a good one. Very good. For the first time the actual source of inflation is being combated. Past governments tried price freezes. Some worked for a month or two. Some a bit longer, but in the end they all collapsed. FHC believes that inflation is caused by the government spending more than it takes in. When an individual does this, he goes broke. So does the businessman or the industrialist. Governments don't go broke. They borrow money and pay the interest with money they print. Because their credit is bad, they must pay higher and higher interest so that people will invest. Right now banks are paying in the neighborhood of 50% per month on savings accounts.

The first step in straightening out Brazil's finances was to zero the deficit. It meant reducing spending, increasing taxes and getting tough on tax evaders.

The next step, the Caballo Plan from Argentina, is to create a temporary currency that should have little or no inflation – the URV.

The URV – Unidade Real de Referência – is a complicated way of saying “dollar.”

Here's how it would work: A kilo of meat costs 500 Cruzeiros today. But a month from now it will be worth 40% more, that is, 700 Cruzeiros. And in another month, 980 Cruzeiros.

Now convert that kilo of meat into dollars at an exchange rate of 600, for example. Five hundred Cruzeiros divided by 600 equals 83 US cents. So from now on a kilo of meat is 83 cents, and not 500 Cruzeiros, and then 700 Cruzeiros, and then 980 Cruzeiros^{1/4}

But remember, the URV is a reference currency, an indexer. Meat and rice and beans and floor wax will still be paid for in Cruzeiros. And for a while at least, Cruzeiros will inflate. But that's OK. Since the URV will be very closely tied to the dollar, there will be a daily exchange rate, just like we now have for the dollar. So, if I buy a kilo of meat for 0.83 URV's, I will multiply that by the daily exchange rate and know what to pay in Cruzeiros.

That's a clumsy situation, isn't it? Absolutely. But remember that the URV is a temporary and intangible currency. Within several months the Cruzeiros should be buried and a new currency, the Real, reign in its place. Then, if the Real can continue to be harnessed to the dollar, and government spending carefully controlled, we should have a civilized inflation rate. So be it.

Remembering Out Loud

Salmo de David

One evening while Dewey Unruh was preaching in the town congregation, toward the end of the sermon, a young man came in and sat down in one of the back benches.

Salmo de David – Psalm of David – is a strange name, even in Portuguese. His mother, a staunch Pentecostal, must have given vent to some of her religious fervor when she named her son. Salmo de David is a brother to Jorge, whose story was published some months ago in this little paper.

Seeing Salmo de David in church brought back many memories.

I learned to know Salmo de David back in the days when I had my store. He had done a stint in the Air Force, where he became a dog trainer, in addition to his responsibilities as a bugler. When he returned to Rio Verde, he somehow managed to combine these two functions.

I still see him walking down the street, his long hair blowing in the wind. Fastened around his left arm was a thick piece of leather. When teaching dogs to attack a human being, it was this arm they would bite. Hanging near his waist was a bugle, ostensibly used to train his dogs. In reality, I think it was more of an attention getter than anything else. In his right hand would be a leash, attached to a large German Shepherd or Dobberman, obediently trotting several paces ahead of him.

A natural actor, Salmo de David could put on a show most any place he chose. Actually, Salmo was a walking show. I think that there were few people who didn't stop to take a second look when he walked by.

He loved to dramatize his experiences in the Air Force. The demonstration I remember best was how things went one day when he was to play the bugle during the reception of an important Air Force general.

Standing stiffly at attention, he raises his arm and places an imaginary bugle to his lips. He blows. His cheeks puff out. He becomes red. But not a sound does his bugle make. More puffing. By now it is easy to visualize him, the center of attention on the review grounds. The ceremony can't continue without the bugle sounding the proper notes.

In the tense silence, there is but one solution. Ignore the hundreds of eyes fastened on him, unscrew the mouthpiece and remove the offending cigarette butt, placed there by a less than well wishing (but totally delighted) buddy. Only then can the reception continue.

One day Salmo de David asked to use the store bike that had a front end carrier for delivering up to a hundred pounds of feed. When he came back, he had a harrowing experience to tell. Apparently he had a pretty good load when he headed down a long, steep hill. When he went to try the hand brakes, he found they didn't work. And he was going faster and faster. The only solution was to apply pressure directly on the front tire with his shoe. It should have worked beautifully, for in a most literal sense he was using

a brake shoe. The only problem was that by the time he hit the bottom of the hill, the temperature inside of the brake shoe had risen to intolerable levels.

He ended his story: “It wasn’t until I got to the bottom of the hill that I discovered that your bike had pedal brakes.” A little backward pressure on the pedals would have had the same effect – with less heat.

Salmo de David had a kennel on the outskirts of town where he trained dogs. Whenever he had a medical problem with his dogs, he would call me. I enjoyed these trips to the kennel. Salmo de David was a born dog trainer and I enjoyed watching him handle his dogs.

But as time went on, these calls became more frequent. I would get there and it seemed he would have a hard time remembering which dog was supposedly sick. Finally he would point out the “sick one.” One look at it was enough to tell there wasn’t a solitary thing wrong with the hound, but I would go through the motions of an examination and then announce, “This dog is in fine shape.” The dog would wag his tail and Salmo de David would wag his head.

Then one day Salmo de David came to my store and said he had a very sick dog. Could I come immediately?

We went. When we got to his kennel, we went in through the front door. Instead of showing me the sick dog, he took me all the way through and then out the back door. Then we followed a trail through the weeds until we got to a little shack. There was my patient.

I don’t remember if the little dog had anything the matter with it. It certainly wasn’t an emergency.

Why all the calls? The only reason I can figure out is that it meant a free ride from the middle of town all the way out to his kennel. And then, Salmo de David did enjoy company.

I sold my store and for quite a few years we saw little of each other.

After church I went to talk to Salmo de David. I might mention that he no longer has his right hand. Several years ago he was involved in some sort of an accident with firecrackers and lost his hand.

He was downcast. He said, “Charles, you know I’m sick, don’t you?” I told him I did. “You know I have AIDS, don’t you?” Again I told him I did.

Making a supreme effort to appear detached from his own problem, he told me how many months he could expect to live and the complications that would probably cause his death. But he didn’t quite manage. Every little bit he would break down and cry. Then he would continue his story.

Several of the ministers came to talk to him. He told of how that morning he went downtown and purchased some deadly poison, expecting to end everything. (Actually, he confessed, he didn’t buy the poison. He got it in exchange for a non-existent dog which he promised to deliver to the merchant.) Now he had second thoughts. Maybe he would even take the poison back.

We tried to reason with him. What did he have to lose by becoming a Christian? He admitted he knew what he should do, but then came the petty excuses.

Salmo de David is an intelligent, very likable person. He needs help. If you find a little open spot in your prayers, squeeze him in. ▲

Agriculture

Cerrado

Cerrado, pronounced “say-HA-doe,” means rolling plains covered with little or no woods. As I have mentioned before, when we first moved to Rio Verde, cerrado was considered worthless as farm ground, and almost worthless as grazing land for cattle. Back then tens of thousands of acres could have been bought for a song.

VEJA magazine recently ran another story on cerrados, which include all of the state of Goiás, as well as a number of others. Following are some interesting facts found in this article:

Brazil has approximately 500 million acres of cerrado, which would be the total combined land area of Portugal, Spain, France, England, Italy, Holland and Belgium. It's one of the last agricultural frontiers in the world. This same land, that 20 years ago only produced skinny cattle, today is responsible for 28% of all grain produced in Brazil, which is 20 million (long) tonnes a year. Forty five million head of cattle, 30% of the national herd, are raised on cerrado.

Ecologists should be happy, because every acre of cerrado put into production represents an acre of the rain forest that need not be cut down.

This cerrado has the potential of within a short time producing food for 250 million people. Europeans are investing in the cerrado and in the last 15 years, the Japanese alone have invested 400 million dollars, and are planning, in a few days, to spend another 90 million for new agricultural colonies. The Brazilians help in these projects, by making loans that are later repaid.

The greater part of the investments, however, are made by individuals who dream of making good. These are men who deal in dollars and pay more attention to the Chicago market than to what is going on in Brasília. Very few of these colonists even know the name of the Brazilian Minister of Agriculture. They say, “You can't expect anything of someone who has nothing to give.”

The climate in areas of cerrado is ideal for agriculture and the lay of the land is perfect. It's flat ground that adapts well to modern farming methods. There never has been an extended dry spell in the cerrado. There are farmers who get up to three crops a year without irrigation, such is the abundance of rain. Those who irrigate can make up to five crops. It's impossible to come up with similar results in the United States or in Europe, where winter ties up their fertile land for at least three months out of the year. An agronomist involved in research says, “The cerrado is one of the few places in the world where you can farm the year around.”

Is the cerrado a paradise? By no means. This soil, in its original state is very infertile, with such a low pH, as to render it practically useless for farming or grazing purposes. To correct these deficiencies takes an investment. Also, since the soil is very soft, erosion can be quite a problem.

Brazil News

Another problem that the farmers face is getting their crops to market. Since everything goes by truck, it ends up costing the farmer 42 dollars a tonne. In southern Brazil, where the roads are better and the distances less, it costs only 15 dollars.

Now VEJA dedicates a long paragraph to our neighbor Douglas Ferrell, of whom I have written before in this little paper:

Computerized Tractor – It's easy to imagine that the men who farm this ground are a bunch of hillbillies. The American farmer, Eugene Douglas Ferrell, has a farm in the municipality of Rio Verde that reminds one of the TV program Dallas. Six months ago he spent half a million dollars to buy a line of John Deere equipment produced in America, where it is considered the Cadillac of tractors. Ferrell's tractors have air conditioned cabs and his equipment is computerized. He states that half of the 900 thousand dollars he takes in yearly is profit. "I'm better off here than I would be in my own country. There I wouldn't be able to have a spread like this. Here I have a latifúndio [word used to describe a very large tract of land]." It might be of interest to some that a spread like Ferrell's, of five thousand acres, all in production and with the necessary machinery, costs no less than seven million dollars. This is a lot of money, and especially in Brazil where it is still possible to buy virgin soil, in more remote areas, for o preço de banana [a little of nothing].

There are still 225 million acres of cerrado waiting to be put into production. If all of this land would be farmed, 250 million tonnes of grain would be produced per year. This would be more than four times the total amount harvested in all of Brazil this year. Add to this 12 million tonnes of meat and 90 million tonnes of fruit that also could be produced on the same land, the total would be 352 million tonnes of food. Enough for a continent.

The cerrado is rough on farmers who want to use outdated techniques. But for those who take care of the land, the returns are fabulous. A certain co-op figures that for every dollar spent in research, they get back 18 thousand dollars in economical benefits.

Until recently it was believed that wheat couldn't be raised at less than 700 meters elevation (2,275 feet). In the cerrado it is now being raised at 500 meters elevation (1,625 feet). It was believed that eating beans couldn't be raised where temperatures go above 28°C (82.4°F). In the cerrado beans are being raised where temperatures hit 35°C (95°F).

The average production per acre of the best fields of eating beans planted in cerrado is four times better than the average yields in the rest of Brazil. Soybeans planted in cerrado produce twice as much as those planted in other areas.

A businessman from São Paulo who has a ranch in the state of Goiás, raises 15 thousand head of cattle. His steers are being slaughtered at 13 months, instead of at 4 years, which is the national average. They are taking in approximately 1.6 million dollars a year.

Another myth that the cerrado has dethroned is that a farmer can't be successful without help from the government. John Landers, an English agronomist, makes it plain that easy money is the worst weed that can get into a crop. During the time that the government loaned out money on low interest, the farmer sat around waiting for the

Banco do Brasil to release money to begin planting – and ended up planting way late. Low interest and monetary correction were responsible for the low production in this country. The same was true in the cerrados, where part of the money borrowed to put out crops was invested in apartment buildings and expensive vehicles.

One thing has become evident through all this. There is no place for the small operator on the cerrado. A farm under 750 acres is not economically feasible. Of all the cerrado farms, 62% are larger than 2,500 acres. Only 0.5% are under 250 acres.

So much for VEJA. The American Colony would certainly fit into the 0.5% category. I sincerely believe that the Colony farms, even though far below the 2,500 acre breaking point, have a higher profit margin than the larger farms. I know there are figures available here on the Colony to prove that to keep a family farm small enough to not need any full time help, is the most efficient.

You folks in N America need to learn to say cerrado, a beautiful word. ▲

Education

The Four R's

Recess, the fourth R, can easily determine the success or failure of the other three R's. Many discipline problems in the classroom can be attenuated, or even eliminated, by placing the proper emphasis on the fourth R.

To understand the fourth R, we must remember that a child's concentration span is limited. As of yet, he hasn't mastered the adult concept that a job well done is reward in itself. He appreciates words of praise. He likes good grades. But he wants something more tangible, something more exciting.

Due to tight schedules and rigid lesson plans, to an effort to cram too much into a year (educational covetousness), a teacher can easily overlook the importance of recess.

For recess to be educational, it must be interesting. It must be fun. And it must be a highlight in the child's daily schedule. It must be something he hates to miss. It's a positive sign when children need to occasionally be reminded not to stampede out of the classroom at recess time.

For recess to qualify as the fourth R, it must be organized. The same as children know what their class schedule is on the three R's, they should know, at least on a weekly basis, what they will be doing at recess.

"Objection!" you shout. "Not all my children like the same games, so I let them divide into groups."

"Objection!" I shout. "Do you let some of your students study only math and others only geography and others only reading, because they don't like the same subjects?"

Of course not. Then why make an exception on the fourth R?

All students from a particular class (or classes, depending on the situation) should be involved in the same activities. These activities should be scheduled by the teacher,

if possible, on a weekly basis. In other words, the students know that during the week of March 7 they will be playing basketball or softball, or whatever. This means that no precious minutes will be lost on the playground trying to decide what to play.

Since many activities require teams, teachers must be very alert to subtle maneuvers made by certain students to always be on the same team. This has very unhealthy long range effects. We want our children to play hard on the playground. They must do their best. They should play to win. However, it is the game that is won, and not we who win the game. Anytime that the emphasis is on we, or on our team, there is a problem.

Students must see the players of the opposite team as their buddies. When the game is over they should be one big team. When the emphasis is on the game, and not on the team, good players will actually enjoy being on opposite teams, knowing that the game will be more challenging. To concentrate the good players on one team and the weaker ones on another is no fun for anyone.

(Just a little sidelight. Wouldn't to stress the game and not the team be a tremendous preparation for later life, when in church we must gather to discuss issues? When we can discuss the issue and keep personalities out, isn't that 75% of the solution?)

Not all games require teams. Here teachers must watch carefully to make sure the larger or stronger students don't take unfair advantage of the smaller or weaker.

I will never forget the time I was up to bat as a first grader. An eighth grader was the pitcher. I hit the ball with all my might – which wasn't much. It headed straight for the pitcher. Instead of catching it and getting me out of the way, he fumbled the ball. While he fumbled I ran. I made it to first. The pitcher still fumbled. I made it to second. More fumbling. To third. I made a home run. The most important home run I ever made in my life.

Tremendous lessons can be learned on the playground. Lack of consideration for other students, especially the younger or weaker, should be reprimanded. And if the problem persists, punished. On the other hand, when a student shows special consideration, the teacher should make a point of, in private, giving a few words of praise. In special occasions this can be done before the class.

Back in the classroom, the teacher should occasionally take five or 10 minutes to discuss the game. Students should take part in this discussion. When the teacher notices that students have learned from the players on the opposite team, and are willing to say so openly, a tremendous victory has been won.

Contrary to what students some times believe, an organized recess is a pleasant recess. It's fun. It's something to look forward to.

Now, back to the classroom.

Most children have a tendency, in a greater or lesser degree, to be lazy and to misbehave. Possibly the greatest challenge of the teacher is to help the student see that neither laziness nor misbehavior bring satisfaction.

I doubt if there is a teacher who can do this strictly by kind words. Most children at times need some sort of discipline. And that is what this article is about. I feel that by not giving this fourth R the proper attention, our discipline at times becomes distorted.

Misbehavior in school can be classified:

1. Petty misbehavior, such as whispering, making faces, etc. etc.
2. Academic misbehavior, such as unfinished lessons, sloppy writing, carelessness, etc.
3. Aggressive or stubborn behavior, such as defying authority, bullying other students, destroying school property, etc.
4. Impure behavior, which would include any type of immoral conduct or anything that would have a degrading influence on other students.

The first two behavior problems are quite common and obviously not as serious as the last two. They require more or less the same degree of discipline. The third one, aggressive or stubborn behavior, is much more serious and demands more rigid discipline, including corporal punishment. The fourth, impure behavior, requires severe discipline, which could vary from corporal punishment to expulsion. The board should always be involved in these cases and the parents notified.

The comments which follow are directed at the first two categories of misbehavior.

The fourth R has a tremendous influence on these two types of misbehavior. To administer severe discipline – the kind reserved for the last two categories of misbehavior – for petty and academic misbehavior is an open admission of failure on the part of the teacher. It's like using a 12 gauge shotgun loaded with buckshot to kill a sparrow.

Children who have thoroughly enjoyed themselves at recess will study harder and behave better than those who just “messed around.” By no means, though, will a good recess solve all problems, but it puts at the teacher's fingertips a number of important options.

When recess isn't interesting, it isn't much of a punishment to have to stay in. In fact, it can even be a way of getting out of “having” to go out to recess. The big plus of a good recess is that it makes staying in an effective punishment for minor problems.

Let's notice a few other options:

Teacher (on the playground): OK, recess is over. (Groans from the students.) But I'll tell you what. You children have really studied hard for the last while. We're going to have another 10 minutes of recess.

Teacher: I don't feel you students have been putting enough into your studies. Your grades could be better. So I'll tell you what we're going to do. Friday noon I am going to average up all of this weeks grades. If you as a class come up with an 85% average (90% or whatever), we're going to play softball during last period instead of having art.

Teacher (Monday morning): I have decided that we're going to play softball last period on Friday. But, as you know, we've been having a lot of whispering problems here lately. So I'm going to write all your names up here in the corner of the chalk board. Each time you whisper you'll get a mark behind your name. Anyone with two (three, four¹/₄) marks will have the privilege of staying in instead of going out for recess. Now it's up to you.

This list could go on and on, but, I think you have gotten the point. Any effort you teachers put into recess will pay off many times more in the classroom.

How long should recess be? No less than 15 minutes and no less than two a day (besides, of course, the noon break). To cut recess short to come up with more time for teaching the three R's is robbing Peter to pay Paul.

I know of no greater help to teaching the three R's, than the fourth R. ▲

Literature

Another Step Ahead

Until about a month ago, all of our church literature here in Brazil, except for tracts, was printed on an old model 7000 Xerox copier. Three things can be said for this machine: It is a reliable workhorse, it's fast (a copy a second), and is cheap to operate. Really, that's saying a lot. But on the other hand, the quality of the copies it makes is on the weak side.

Say what you will about the old copier, but one thing nobody can deny: It has been the means of making the gospel available to a lot of people, not only in Brazil, but also in Mozambique and Angola. In fact, a few of our Mensageiros are being sent to Brazilians living in N America.

The Brazilian Publication Board decided recently to have our Portuguese Sunday School books and the Mensageiro printed at Gráfica Girassol, the print shop which is owned by Stanley Schultz and operated by José Cardoso.

There are especially three benefits. First of all, the off-set obviously does a far better job than our old copier. Secondly, it gives Faith and me a bit of a breather, because before we did all this work. And finally, it gives Gráfica Girassol more work. Printing just the tracts wasn't quite enough work to keep them busy. Included in this would be the fact that the work continues to be done by our people.

Instead of sending all the English Sunday School books to Brazil, which involves a fabulous amount of postage, one copy is sent, which we copy on our machine. Now there is talk that at least the English Youth & Adult lessons should be made on the off-set. Instead of sending us a book to copy, Gospel Publishers in the US would send us a diskette with the lessons on. Because of different desk top publishing programs involved, this could be a bit complicated, but I think it will be possible. If we find it works, I suspect the Youth & Adult lessons will be made at Gráfica Girassol too, although this still depends on a board decision.

The next step will be to begin printing our books on an off-set. There are a number of options involved here, as to where it would be done, but at any rate, our literature is beginning to take on a new look.

This & That

John & Joan Unruh took Isaac Akinyombo to the Pirenópolis mission for a visit. They made a quick tour of Brasília, and headed back to Goiânia for him to catch his flight back to Lagos. Mark & Glenda Loewen took Dewey & Doreen to Curitiba, in the southern state of Paraná, to visit some of their relatives. Remember that there are a lot of Germans living in southern Brazil.

Brazil 14 News

Delwyn & Becky Peters were here for a visit. The Holdeman and Burns clans got together for a big churrasco at Daniel Holdeman's place.

Enos & Clara Miller are back home – at least temporarily – after spending a number of months in the US.

Elias & Colleen Stoltzfus were to the Buhl, Idaho congregation for meetings. They have already returned. Sherilyn Yoder stayed with their children while they were gone.

The Rio Verdinho Congregation's meetings began on February 11 and ended February 22. Luke Troyer and Curt Ensz were the evangelists.

Clinton & Marie Unruh had a little girl, Alécia Joan, on February 18. I was really thrilled when Clinton drove up and told us about Alécia. You see, his wife wanted me to make birth announcements for both a boy and a girl, figuring it would be one or the other. But I didn't have time to make announcements for one, let alone for two, so I just messed around until bango, there she was. And I got by with making one announcement instead of two.

Corn harvest is about over. Yields were down from last year, but certainly not enough to call it a crop failure. Some rice is being harvested. Soybean harvest will probably begin about a month from now.

Harold & Emma Dirks, and daughter Greta, from Bonners Ferry, Idaho, are here for a visit. After all the years they lived here, we are always glad to see them come. I understand that next week they plan on paying Leo & Mim a visit in Mato Grosso.

It has been most interesting to hear the Brazilians' reaction on Isaac Akinyombo's English. Almost without exception they say they could understand him better than they do the North Americans. Our brother from Goiânia, Luis Fernandes, who is a dentist, said he could understand almost everything he said.

On February 1, Isaac gave another report in the Monte Alegre church. This time he wore his tribal clothes. A lot of questions were asked concerning how they handle the customs between the different tribes in Africa, especially when there is intermarriage. People were so anxious to get their questions in that they wouldn't even let him finish answering one question before they asked another. Quite often up to three people tried to ask questions at once. The meeting was a real success.