

# Brazil News

---



No. 38  
July 1994

Editorial

## Flashes

For this world to function properly, for nations to be civilized, people must have common sense. Especially the leaders.

Common sense is not dependent on religion. An atheist can show common sense. Nor is it dependent on social status. Slum dwellers can show common sense, as can the illiterate.

Common sense should never be confused with Godly wisdom. A wise man will have common sense, but a man can have common sense and be devoid of Godly wisdom.

What is common sense?

It's the ability to think soundly and make intelligent decisions on issues pertaining to the natural life. It's a faculty that God built into human nature to insure the survival of those who don't have Godly wisdom.

Possibly one of the strangest examples of this is former president Ronald Reagan. A product of Hollywood, divorced, with an exceptionally unexemplary family, not religiously inclined, and yet a man of tremendous common sense on many basic issues that Mennonites consider essential to good government.

In the world today, we see a drastic decline of common sense. Especially on the leadership level this is true. As we scan the profiles of present leaders, we see no Churchills nor Eisenhowers.

What has gone wrong? What has happened to common sense? Where has it gone?

We are living in the age of the "flash." The few moments I occasionally watch television in public places leave me deeply frustrated. I see something that catches my attention – a beautiful mountain scene. Just as I begin concentrating, another scene flashes on, now a river. Again I concentrate and just that quick there is another flash. Then comes a commercial, which is another series of flashes.

And if that isn't enough, through satellite reception and cable TV, it's possible to sit

## Brazil <sup>2</sup> News

in an easy chair and with remote control access dozens, maybe hundreds of different channels, from different parts of the globe.

It would be interesting to know how many flashes occur during one hour of normal viewing.

In a very lesser degree even we are exposed to flashes. We have in our living rooms a half dozen different magazines varying from religious periodicals to the National Geographic. We can, in the space of an hour, immerse ourselves in Regeneration, the war in Bosnia, drug cartels in Colombia, recession and unemployment, the launching of a space shuttle, a hurricane in the Philippines, the latest scientific advances.

In addition to all this, there is the mobility factor. If we're not in a mind for any of these flashes, we can hop into our car and within 15 minutes or less be in an entirely different environment.

Man is an orbital creature. A wobbly or errant satellite cannot transmit data. If there is any one thing that is causing man to wobble, to be unstable in orbit, it is the constant bombardment of flashes.

Exactly why are flashes causing man to wobble out of orbit, to lose his common sense?

Real life is not made up of flashes. It's made up of routine, even drudgery. It's perseverance. It's hanging in. It's accepting that which we are unable to change. It's realizing the greatest blessings are many times found in moments of quietness. It's occasionally listening to the ticking of the clock, watching the hands slowly sweep the dial.

Great sermons aren't a series of flashes. They are born in the quietness of study and meditation. Of prayer. Wobbly satellites don't produce inspiring hymns. Time must be spent with the mind and heart turned toward the Light. (Unfortunately, too many of the songs being written in the church today are more flash than inspiration.) Strong Christians are men and women on a stable orbit. They are not flashy – in a very literal sense.

There is no point in wishing ourselves back fifty or a hundred years, when life was much simpler. It's true we're flying a much tighter orbit than our forefathers did. In some areas, we see more progress in one year than they did in their entire lifetime. Life itself is becoming a rapid series of flashes.

We must stand firm. We cannot permit that our human relations (which include marriage) become a series of flashes. Our vocation in life must be established on a carefully calculated orbit. We must be in control of our time, and not vice versa.

Flashes. Flashes everywhere. Shallow and ruined minds. Hard and insensitive hearts. An inability to face reality. A vain hope, that like the screen of a television set, a new flash will bring a new and better scene.

Our survival depends on a steady orbit. It depends on more than self control – although that surely is necessary. As time comes to an end in a blur of flashes, the opening statement that “Common sense is not dependent on religion,” will become less and less true. Indeed, not too many flashes into the future, it can be expected that where there is no Godly wisdom, neither will there be common sense. Then the camp of the saints will be surrounded.

Beware of the flashes.



Brasília

## The Real is Real

The real is now our official currency. It is real. And so good.

The switch from the cruzeiro real to the real on July 1, was very orderly. I have read of no banks being robbed – which proves that even bank robbers have some common sense. With the tight security, especially around the banks designated as distribution centers, it would take a small army to get where the money is. Our local Banco do Brasil continues to be in the center of a four block area that has been cordoned off and is guarded by soldiers with rifles and grenade launchers.

The real has been set up on a 1:1 parity with the dollar. However, and this is unbelievable, on both the official and parallel exchange, the real is stronger than the dollar. Instead of one dollar buying tens of thousands of cruzeiros, as was the case in the past, one dollar now buys less than one real, good news for someone buying dollars, bad news for anyone selling.

With few exceptions, the people are happy with the real. They believe it will work. One of the first practical results is that presidential candidate FHC – Fernando Henrique Cardoso's – ratings in the polls have begun rising and Lula's (the socialist candidate) are falling. As mentioned before, the success or failure of the real will decide who our next president will be.

All cruzeiros reais were converted to reais at a 2,750:1 exchange rate. This rate has been frozen and until the end of this month, any cruzeiros reais will be converted by the same figure.

On a street level, the new currency is obviously creating some confusion. A restaurant that a lot of Americans go to in Rio Verde when spending the day in town, sells food by the kilo. A good meal, which includes churrasco, together with drinks runs between two to two and a half dollars.

We had been doing a little work on our house and were dead tired several evenings ago. So we decided to have supper in town. We were six of us, which should have cost around twelve to fifteen dollars. However, when the girl figured up our bill, a bit unsteadily she said, "Forty six reais." Suddenly my supper no longer tasted very good. I said, "Whew! Things really have gone up, haven't they?" Uncomfortably she told me how many kilos we had eaten and the price per kilo. I got out my calculator and figured it up, added the drinks, and it came to R\$16 (That's how we write figures in reais). She called over one of the other workers and he confirmed my figure.

The girl was so confused she didn't so much as apologize. She seemed to be in deep thought when we left. I'm positive she had no intentions of taking us for a ride. She could have just as easily told us the supper cost only two reais for all six of us.

Someone told me of being in the supermarket when a fellow bought some groceries and paid for them with cruzeiros. When he was handed the change, he began accusing the cashier of dishonesty. After all, he had given her tens of thousands of cruzeiros

reais, hadn't bought all that many groceries, and was getting just a few reais back as change. I understand he asked for his money back and left without the groceries.

I suspect these scenes have been repeated all over Brazil.

Prices are dropping. That doesn't say a lot, since some prices went up as much as 150% above inflation in the last several months. Now the laws of free enterprise are surfacing. Since it's easy to compare prices, people are buying where the prices are best. The government is asking people to boycott establishments whose prices are out of reason.

By no means can it be said at this point that the real is a guaranteed success. But it can be. And may it be. ▲

## Colonization

Not only is the real real, but also the colony in Mato Grosso. Temporary camp has been set up and a lot of work is being done.

Luís Duarte, one of the land owners, was there several weeks ago. He came back all excited. One of their neighbors – a big operator – who has a twin engine plane, gave them a ride over the area. Being a long ways from town, this plane may come in handy should an emergency arise. This same neighbor has a phone and there is a possibility of running a line to the colony, which would be around five miles. Also nearby, a large hydroelectric facility is going to go into operation before too long. It appears it will be feasible to run a line to the colony. That would be progress. ▲

## This Month on the Colony

### Cold weather

Cold weather is different in Brazil than it is in N America. When it gets down to freezing here, we act like you Americans do when it gets to 20 degrees below, and Canadians when it's 30 below.

Of course, there's a reason for this. To begin with, cold snaps here don't usually last over a week, at the very most. Secondly, being a tropical country, people seem to think that if they pretend there is no such thing as cold weather, maybe it won't get cold. As a result few people prepare for cold weather. Houses aren't heated. Neither are schools, businesses, hospitals, or anything else. Cars and trucks don't have heaters.

For the poorer folks, things are even worse. As a rule their houses have no ceilings, they don't have enough covers to really stay warm at night and other than for a sweater or light jacket, they have no special clothes for cold weather.

That's what makes the cold here so much colder than yours. People have no way of warming up.

## Brazil News

On the Colony here, of course, it's different. Most of our houses are quite air tight and have fireplaces. Where we really have it made is in our new literature center with double masonry walls, where our central air either cools or heats.

Taking a shower is something else. Most of us have electric showers, which are standard throughout all of Brazil. You folks who plan on paying us a visit someday, pay attention to how they work. The shower head has a heating element in it. It also has a little switch on top for hotter or colder. But you never, never want to mess with that switch when taking a shower if the water is too cold. Never, never. Not only because it can be a shocking experience, but also because most showers always are on hot.

When turned on, the water running through the shower head raises a float that activates the heating element. Since the heat produced is constant, the more the shower is turned on, the less the water has a chance to heat. So to have a hotter shower, simply close the faucet a bit.

That brings us to a new factor involved in taking a shower when the weather is cold. Those of you who have been here know that instead of using pressure tanks, we use water towers – usually 25-30 feet high, which gives us good pressure in our water systems. This means that when the thermometer dips to around freezing, the water in the tank, especially if it sets overnight, is also near freezing. Now run near freezing water through an electric shower. No matter how much you close the faucet, it still comes through barely warm. About the only good thing that can be said about taking a shower in a chilly bathroom with lukewarm water, is that it's good for stimulating circulation.

Just another word on our gravity fed water systems. They work fabulously. We usually put a float with a switch in the tank which turns the pump on when the water reaches a predetermined level, and then turns it off again when the tank is full.

The most primitive version of this system consists of a long, straight tree cut out of the woods that is then erected near the well. A small platform is built on top and a 250 gallon asbestos tank placed on top.

(No, we don't get cancer from drinking water that was stored in asbestos tanks. First of all because we don't normally inhale water into our lungs. We drink it. And even should our tanks flake off, the flakes do no harm to the intestinal tract.

Since these tanks are used extensively all over Brazil, and have been for years and years and years, if there was any danger, people would be dying from asbestos induced cancer all over the place. I have never heard of a single case. So, N American visitors, don't worry about drinking our water – the best in the world.)

In a bit more sophisticated version, these asbestos tanks can be placed on concrete poles, which don't periodically rot out.

More and more people on the Colony are using round metal tanks. They can have a capacity of up to a thousand or two thousand gallons. They look quite nice, but do have the disadvantage of depending on a good coat of paint to avoid

rusting. And naturally, they are a lot more expensive than the tanks perched on a pole.

Just one other little item that makes our cold weather different from yours. Our cars, trucks, tractors, etc., are tropical. This is especially true in the case of alcohol motors, that once the temperature dips below 45°F they show signs of not wanting to start anymore. When the thermometer hits zero, forget about starting an alcohol motor, unless the battery is really good and the little gadget that injects gasoline in the carburetor is working perfectly. The other option on a cold day is a “Brazilian starter.” (A hill that you park the car on when the weather gets cold. You’d be surprised at how many tractors use Brazilian starters too.)

I mentioned some time ago, all the different means of transportation that have been used to get to church here: horse, bike, tractor, jeep, car, truck, on foot – even an airplane. Well, here comes a new one: a combine!

Yep, that’s right. The other Sunday morning when the temperature slid way down, Sid Schmidt discovered his car wouldn’t start. Not being the kind to stay home from church for any little reason, he decided to give his combine a try. Would it start? It started. So he, his wife, and their little boy hopped into the cab and came to church.

I have no doubt but what they reaped a blessing. ▲

## The Butcher House

The butcher house is an important fixture on the American Colony. Set up by Richard Mininger a number of years ago, it’s where people go to get their butchering done.

I never figured out for sure why Richard has a meat house. Considering his investment and the very small fee he charges to butcher a critter, I don’t believe he has ever made a cent. But then, I suppose even preachers like to have a hobby. And there’s no getting around it, his hobby – if that is what it really is – has done the Colony a tremendous service.

The activity usually begins around 7:00 in the morning, when those who have a steer, or whatever, hanging in the walk-in cooler come to begin cutting it up and packaging the meat. By noon or shortly after two or three animals have found their way into plastic bags.

As of last month, Richard turned over the management of the butcher shop to Tim Burns. I believe there is even a possibility that Tim will move the shop down to his place sometime in the future.

With everyone doing their own work in the butcher shop, under the owner’s supervision, we are having no problems with state or federal inspection, for there’s no law prohibiting people from doing their own butchering – which for all practical purposes they are doing.

I believe Richard will miss his hobby. ▲

## A Brazilian Story

by Mário de Moraes

### **A Necklace for Glória**

Glória was not a wealthy young lady, but she was obsessed by the thought of someday being the owner of a pearl necklace. It could be no imitation and had to be the kind that would catch people's attention at a distance.

But Glória was a seamstress and her wages weren't at all compatible with a pearl necklace. It's true she worked for a woman from Leblon [a rich section of Rio de Janeiro] who had one of the ritziest fashion shops in Ipanema [also in Rio], but her job was merely to do some of the hand work. A dreamer, she imagined herself wearing the expensive clothes that she helped make.

When a wealthy customer would show up, wearing a costly pearl necklace, Glória's dreams would soar even higher. She would imagine herself a rich lady from the high society, strutting around in fine clothes and adorned with a pearl necklace. Glória did have taste and she soon found that a simple pearl necklace lacked charm, that two strands were perfect, and that three strands looked overdone. So, of course, in her dreams she would always wear one with two strands.

One of Glória's favorite pastimes was to visit jewelry stores. Because of this habit she ended up learning to know a jeweler in Visconde de Pirajá. As time went on, she became an expert on pearls. From quite a distance she could judge their quality and know their exact market value. The dream of owning a pearl necklace became an obsession. Her aim was a necklace with two strands of medium sized pearls. She knew the exact price she would have to pay.

Glória opened a savings account. Even though her wage was very low, by cutting corners, every month she was able to deposit a little money. Cruzado by cruzado [our currency when José Sarney was president of Brazil some years back] her balance increased. Finally the day arrived in which she had the pleasant surprise of finding the balance on the savings account was the same as the price asked for the medium sized pearl, double strand necklace. Her skimping had paid off. And it wasn't without sacrifices. How many times didn't she go without lunch to be able to deposit just a few more cruzados.

Glória zeroed out her savings account and went directly to the jewelers. The first problem she ran into was Humberto, the man who waited on her. He wanted to know where she came up with such a pile of cash. She finally had to show him her savings booklet. Seeing it was all above board, he tried to convince her to buy something cheaper. Even though it was to his advantage to sell the necklace she wanted, he knew it didn't agree with her social station in life. She knew what she wanted and that was that.

As the young lady left the jewelers with the small package that held her

precious pearls, she was on cloud nine. She decided to use it for the first time on Sunday. And there, in church, eyes would be riveted on her as she sedately walked up the isle.

But things didn't work out that way. To begin with, when she met her boyfriend, he took one long look at her necklace and demanded, "What kind of a necklace are you wearing anyway?"

Glória began explaining and when she got to the price, he hit the ceiling. "You must be crazy!" And then, suspiciously, "Where did you get all that money?" That was the end of their friendship.

Things didn't go much better with her friends. "My, Glória, they look so nice you can hardly tell they are fake."

When she tried to explain that they were genuine, her friends would give her an odd smile, turn around and leave. Except for Margarida, who icily said, "If they're genuine, it's because you picked them up someplace..."

After all her friends had turned their backs, she found a quiet place to sit down in the town square, where she sobbed her heart out. There was only one solution – return the necklace to its place in the bottom of her purse. That way her folks wouldn't find out about the necklace and she wouldn't have to explain things to them too. They would in no way understand why she spent so much money for a necklace.

The necklace stayed in the bottom of her purse, but that wasn't the end of the story. Soon the entire neighborhood knew that Glória had a "genuine" pearl necklace.

Margarida, who never passed up an opportunity to sling mud, would say, "That necklace is genuine only if marbles are pearls. You can buy piles of that kind of "pearls" on Alfândega Street."

Then her parents heard about the necklace. To avoid more problems, she lied to them, said they were imitation pearls and that she had already sold them. To whom? To one of her friends.

When Glória walked into the Caixa Econômica Federal – CEF [Here I must explain that the CEF is a federal bank that has an agency in most Brazilian cities of any size (including Rio Verde). Instead of taking jewels, or whatever, to a pawn shop to be placed in hoc, here they are taken to the CEF.] and explained what she wanted, the worker who waited on her made no attempt to hide his skepticism. It was even worse after the pearls were inspected and found to be legitimate. She had to show her identity. The amount they gave her for the necklace was much less than she had paid at the jeweler.

Turning to leave, she was told, "Don't forget the due date on this, senhorita. This necklace is worth a lot of money."

Glória couldn't have cared less what it was worth. All she wanted at this point was to never see the necklace again. The bank could do with it whatever it very well pleased. Never again would they see her. ▲



## Behavior

### Life on the Morro

Morro means hill or small mountain. This word takes on a special significance in the city of Rio de Janeiro, where many of the poorer sections are located on fairly steep, conical hills surrounding the city. Each morro exists as a miniature fiefdom, controlled by drug lords.

Recently VEJA magazine interviewed six children to whom the morro is home. Especially one of them, a 13 year old boy who writes poetry, gives some revealing insights into life on his particular morro.

The boy, Josimar Batista de Andrade, is shown lying on a bed that is almost the exact width of the room. Above his bed there is a wooden shutter, and hanging on one wall, a shovel. Pencil in hand, Josimar appears to be writing a poem on a tablet. At his feet there is a small teddy bear.

As you read, notice the deep thinking shown by this child poet.

*Sou criança, sou pequeno  
Mas vejo meus sonhos no chão  
Na verdade, o que escuto  
São tiros de fuzis, escopeta  
e trêsitão.*

I am but a child, very small indeed  
But I see my dreams on the floor  
In reality what I hear  
Are shots from army rifles, shotguns  
and thirty eights [cal. revolvers].

Veja – Where do you live?

Josimar – I have moved to a Ciep [government boarding school]. I lived with my dad and stepmother. My four brothers all left because of my stepmother. She whipped me all the time and then my brothers would beat up on her. So my dad told them to get out. He used to lock the shutter in my bedroom so that I wouldn't be able to run away from home. But now she doesn't whip me any more because one of my relatives told P. (one of the drug lords) what was going on and he made her quit.

Veja – Why did she whip you?

Josimar – When she came to live with my dad, I was only six. I liked her. But then my dad began to drink and make up stories about my brothers. He still does about me. He says I beat up on the others. This isn't true. I don't even know how to fight, I never learned how. In school I am constantly being beat up by the others.

Veja – Wouldn't you like to be stronger?

Josimar – No. I want to be just like I am. Anybody that wants to like me will have to like me the way I am.

Veja – How did you begin to write poetry?

Josimar – My teacher asked us to write a poem in which the first letter of each line would form a word, which happened to be Mother's Day. I wasn't able to write anything, because my mother was dead. I was embarrassed and began to cry. My teacher talked to me and said I could use the name of any person I loved. So I wrote a poem about my teacher. It was my first poem . . .

Veja – How did the poem about the "thirty eights" come about?

Josimar – I wrote this verse together with my friend Bruno. Sometimes I sit down on the doorstep of my house and begin to think about beautiful things. Suddenly I hear shots. It's something you hear constantly when living in a favela (slum).

Veja – Do you feel there's a lot of violence on this morro?

Josimar – Sometimes. I have been caught in the middle of gunfights, but they were soon over.

Veja – Some children your age become drug pushers. Would you like to be a bandit?

Josimar – I would rather die than to smoke or drink. Children who do this soon become drug pushers and end up dying. I prefer to someday die of a heart attack, or anything else for that matter, than to be shot.

Veja – Why do children become drug pushers?

Josimar – So they can buy drugs.

Veja – If they had work or could study in a good school, do you think they would get off of drugs?

Josimar – No. It takes a lot of will power. Even if they had work, they wouldn't spend their money on anything useful. They would buy more drugs. One of my brothers got involved in this. The police caught him at it and beat him up, with a hammer. When they got done he was spitting blood. He quit drugs. Now he holds down a job.

Veja – Have you ever gone on an outing?

Josimar – Once, when I was 7, my stepmother took me to the zoo. She took me to the movies too. I bought some yogurt.

Veja – Have you ever had a birthday party?

Josimar – Once, when I was ten years old. There was a cake and my friends came to the party. It was real good. I got a little car and play cycle as presents.

Veja – What do you like to do?

Josimar – I like to spin tops, to play marbles, fly kites. I'm not very good at soccer. I'm not real good at anything I do. But I like to slowly learn.

Veja – But you were at the top of the class in school last year, weren't you?

Josimar – I was, but that was the first time. I began studying in a school on another morro, but it happens that the guys from there didn't get along with the guys on our morro. My stepmother was scared something might happen to me and got me out of there. For the next three years I didn't go to school. My stepmother taught me at home.

She beat me until I learned math. After that she sent me to the same school my cousins went to. They beat me up so much that I finally quit. I didn't pass because of missing so many days of class. Then I began going to another school close to where my stepmother works, which is a long way from home, a gathering place for prostitutes and beggars. Finally when I was 10 years old I began studying in a Ciep . . .

Veja – If you suddenly became rich, would you move away from this morro?

Josimar – No. I like to live on the morro. I'm used to living here and this is where my friends are. I was born here and I'll have to live here the rest of my life. If my family would like to move away and I had the means, I would buy them a house. If someday I become famous, I won't be like other famous people who forget all about their families. But I don't want to be rich. The New Testament says that it's better to have just a little and remember God than to have a lot without God.

Veja – Don't you think you could do both – have money and serve God?

Josimar – No. I don't want a lot of money. Just enough for my livelihood, so that I can have food and raiment.

Veja – Wouldn't you like to have a car, for example?

Josimar – If I had enough money, I would buy a Ford Escort, just like a play car I used to have. But if I didn't have enough money, a VW Bug would be OK too.

Veja – Do you feel that children living here on the morro are different from children that live in other places?

Josimar – Yes. Children who live in apartments even walk different than we do. They are more polite. It isn't that they behave better, but they're smarter. Their parents are able to pay for them to go to a private school. Ours can't . . .

Veja – Do you feel it's just that children like you live here in a favela and other children can live in comfortable homes?

Josimar – No. But then justice the same as doesn't exist in the world today . . .

Veja – For whom are you lonesome?

Josimar – For my mother.

Veja – In whom do you trust?

Josimar – In myself. In my strength. If I have enough will power, I can become mayor. I see this in myself and in others. Any youth living on this morro can have this will power.

*Mas quando acordo eu vejo*

*Uma outra realidade*

*Na verdade o que eu escuto*

*É muito assustador*

*É gente matando gente*

*Que tristeza! Que horror!*

But when I awaken I see

A new reality

Because that which I hear  
Terrorizes me  
It's people killing people  
Oh how sad! Oh how horrible!

### **Ana Paula**

(Ana Paula is 15 years old.)

The only complaint I have about living here on the morro is when the police come around. They get into everything, they beat up on people without even knowing who are honest working folks and who are the bandits. Here on the morro we have a good life. The press likes to call us favelados – slum dwellers. So what? I know that it isn't a good place to live, but even so the entire favela is a home to us.

Everyone living on the morro is scared of the police. Actually, it isn't exactly that we're scared. You finally get used to hearing a lot of shots and having people get killed. This doesn't shake us up anymore . . .

So far as I'm concerned the police are bandits. And it's the bandits who do what the police ought to be doing: make people shape up on the morro and not let people steal or molest others . . .

### **Amanda**

(Ana Paula's 12 year old sister.)

Everyone lives where it works out. I like the morro because we don't have thieves or perverts here. I can leave my bicycle outside and no one will take it. People who aren't acquainted with the morro don't understand. They criticize the bandits, but what they don't know is that it's the bandits who make churrascos for us and give us whole cases of guaraná (a soft drink) to drink. This is good because things are mighty skimpy at home. We eat rice, beans, macaroni, chicken wings and the bony pieces. Seldom do we have vegetables or fruit. Nor milk. We can never buy both food and clothes. We have to buy one or the other. Never both at once. Sometimes people give us used clothes. My folks never bought me a new pair of tennis shoes. I have a pair that a bandit gave me after he robbed a C&A [clothing store] truck. I don't like to use stolen clothes. I would rather have my own money. I would like to have a pair of Redley tennis shoes and an Anonimato tee-shirt. ▲

## **Tract Work**

### **Investigation Trip to Mocambique**

On June 24 Mark Loewen and Harold Holdeman left for Mocambique to check out different contacts made through the tract office here. They returned on July 7, and on Sunday evening, July 10, they gave a report in the Monte Alegre church. The Rio Verdinho congregation also attended.

An interesting aspect to the situation in Mocambique is the fact that a number of groups have “founded” local versions of the Church of God in Christ, Mennonite, in spite of having been told this can’t be done. Even so, one of the groups showed a good spirit, with potential to develop into something concrete.

The “churches” in Mocambique are quite close to the missionaries stationed in Malawi. In fact, Mark and Harold flew into Malawi and then took the bus to Mocambique.

Both brethren who made the trip, as well as those who heard the report, were encouraged with the overall picture in Mocambique. ▲

## Remembering Out Loud

### **Brakes**

In his trip report, Mark Loewen told about how they crossed the border from Malawi to Mozambique. Apparently customs was at the bottom of a hill out in the middle of nowhere.

Coming down the hill, the driver of the Land Rover that was taking them began to swerve back and forth in a strange manner. As they came closer and closer to an obstacle course to keep people from flying through the little one horse customs joint (manned by a couple of guards who didn’t so much as have a vehicle to pursue those who didn’t stop), it became apparent they wouldn’t manage to negotiate the sharp turns, so the driver jolted over the curbs, finally coming to a stop on the other side of the border.

The problem, the driver later explained, was that his brakes didn’t always work. Fortunately, according to Mark, the guards were able to see the humorous side of the situation.

That reminds me of when we were in Salvador, the capitol of the state of Bahia. I don’t know if there is a flat place in that town of more than a million inhabitants. Nor are there many straight streets.

One street which we learned to know quite well was in a section of town where a girl lived who got our Mensageiro and with whom we had been corresponding.

The street was so steep that one day we watched a car, with tires smoking, spin out as it got near the top of the hill. It would back down and take another run at it. Finally, after several tries it made it up.

That wasn’t so bad because we were on the sidewalk watching. Bad was when we would go down this particular street in a taxi. The first thing the drivers would do as they started down was to kick the car out of gear. They would then proceed down just as happy as a lark, like it was the most natural thing in the world to do. That’s more than can be said for me and for my nervous system.

A lot of the taxis in Salvador, at least back when we were there, were VW bugs. One

that we rode up and down the hills in had part of the floor board missing, giving us an excellent view of the street. Once again I failed to appreciate the benefits of seeing the scenery of Salvador from this vantage point.

And then there was the one armed taxi driver who saw nothing wrong with letting go of the steering wheel to shift gears while going up and down and all around.

As we rode the streets of Salvador in taxis, I got the impression that everyone knew everyone. Constantly the drivers waved at each other and flashed friendly smiles.

The hotel we stayed in was near the corner of a five lane one-way street. Instead of going around the block and catching the street we needed to be on, the taxi drivers preferred to cross all five lanes in the hundred feet or so to the intersection, and then make a left turn. To do this the driver would put his arm out of the window and with a friendly wave and an even friendlier smile, suggest that everyone permit him to cut in front of them so that he could make his left turn. It worked every time. And it seemed everyone was glad to accommodate. Long live the taxi drivers in Salvador. ▲

## **This & That**

On June 16 the Glenn Hibner family and their hired man left for their fazenda in Mato Grosso, where they plan on living for several months. I think the idea is to get temporary living quarters set up and get some land ready for planting this year. Lime will have to be hauled for approximately 200 miles over dirt roads.

Ben Koehn got his leg crushed in an accident and had to have surgery. We hope he enjoys reading.

Dean Penners, the missionaries from Mirassol, São Paulo, were out for several days.

They brought bro. Luís Batista and son, Fernando, along to learn to know the church on the Colony. Paula Schultz, their school teacher will be spending vacation on the Colony with her relatives.

On June 19 Edna Loewen had a carry-in dinner at her place for those who wanted to spend a little time with the Mirassol visitors.

For many of us it was the first time we had ever met Luís Batista. To say it was a pleasant surprise is putting it mildly. Space doesn't permit here to give my impressions – not only of him, but of other brethren who were converted in our missions. Maybe next month.

The three month spell of “No cute babies were born . . .” finally came to an end. On

June 19 Stacy & Janette Schmidt had a little girl, – cute, naturally – Chelsea Beth.

On June 22 the Dan Kramer family moved to their fazenda in Mato Grosso. I haven't got the straights on it all, but I think the move is supposed to be permanent, or at least temporarily permanent.

The cold snap we had here reached Mato Grosso too. I think that the new colonists living there in tents will have some interesting stories to tell to their grandchildren.

Dave & Marta Kramer spent several weeks on their place in Mato Grosso.

## Brazil News

Because of the complications of being off the job for a month, Stephen Kramer, the Gospel Tract office superintendent, is taking his vacation in homeopathic doses.

This time he went to Mato Grosso to see his farm. And enjoy the cold weather.

While Stephen is off work, the local Tract Board, Mark Loewen, Harold Holdeman and Clinton Unruh spend some time here in the literature center reading letters and getting tracts ready for mailing. Sid Schmidt also helps.

Luís & Maria Duarte and children spent several days in Mato Grosso. During the trip Luís met his brother Loló, whom he hadn't seen for 14 years.

On July 1, Robson & Glauciene Gold had a cute little baby boy, who will be known as Wellington. It sounds like they should have named him Alarmclock, because of his ability to awaken his folks at all hours of the night.

Myron & Martha Kramer and family returned from the mission in Pirenópolis and are now living in the house that Dan & Marlene vacated. On July 5 the Monte Alegre congregation had a welcome and grocery shower for them in the social hall.

Both Monte Alegre and Rio Verdinho congregations began Wednesday evening Bible Study on June 29. In both congregations the youth are studying the doctrines of the church. The youth themselves asked for this kind of study. Very good.

Leo Dirks made a quick trip to the US to be present at a Harold Dirks family reunion in Idaho.

On July 10 there was a house warming for João Carlos & Sirlei Machado. They are living in Daniel Martin Sr's house.

People sometimes ask me how to "prescribe" to Brazil News. I knew that this little paper is sort of strong medicine at times, but I never knew it was that bad, that you need a prescription to read it. Anyway, since that's the way it is, here's a little hint for when you have a hard time swallowing some especially bitter pill: Write the editor a letter and tell him exactly what you think about the situation (and about him, if you please). Give him a dose of his own medicine. If you are afraid he might publish your letter, write in bold letters, Do not publish, and he will sorrowfully not do so.

The World Soccer Cup is coming to an end. We'll possibly have some comments on it next month.