

# Brazil News

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Editorial

## **A Day in the Morgue**

We begin by introducing Dr. Why, a pathologist and the head medical examiner in a large hospital. Because of a heavy work load, he restricts his practice to postmortems.

Contrary to what one might think, Dr. Why isn't a dour person. The fact that all of his patients are dead has not alienated him from the living. In fact, he is as congenial as people come. If there is such a thing as bringing a bit of sunshine to a morgue, Dr. Why does it.

Medical students love Dr. Why. It isn't unusual for him to work surrounded by students. He has the interesting habit of talking non-stop as he works, describing what is taking place. These soliloquies (yes, even if everyone leaves the room, he keeps on talking) make even the most routine procedure come to life.

Now we shall spend a day with him in the morgue. Decidedly, Dr. Why is not an ordinary doctor nor is his morgue an ordinary morgue. On one wall there is a large plaque, with the following inscription:

Truth is fallen in the street.

—Isaiah 59:14

So there you have it! Dr. Why doesn't dissect cadavers of flesh and bone. He doesn't handle human organs. When the police find truth fallen in the streets, they pick up the body and deliver it to his morgue. Dr. Why's job is to find out what happened to truth.

It's 7:00 a.m., and Dr. Why comes breezing through the door into the morgue. Never early, never late. After a quick exchange of greetings with his assistants, he heads for the dressing room and dons his work clothes. In the meantime his helpers place the first victim on the table.

"An interesting case..." he observes. (Those are always his opening words, because all cases to him are interesting.) "Interesting, indeed. Do you see what I see? (He never waits for an answer.) This has been a violent death. See those wounds? They are deep. In a moment we will see which organs were damaged..."

## Brazil News

“Ah yes, there it is. A severed main artery. He didn’t have a chance. It could have happened a block from the hospital and we wouldn’t have saved him.”

Walking to the desk, Dr. Why quickly reads the police report, occasionally nodding his head. Between what he has seen and read, he now has the story.

“An elderly man walking down the street lost his wallet. It had five 10 dollar bills in it and one five. Two young boys saw what happened and unobserved picked up the wallet. They removed the five 10 dollar bills, but left the five. It was quickly decided that one would take the money and go home, where later they would divide it. The other would run after the man and return his wallet.

“ ‘Mister, did you lose your wallet?’ he asked the old man.

“Feeling his pocket, he exclaimed, ‘Why yes, I did! Thank you so much for returning it.’

“But then he opened the wallet and discovered that 50 dollars were missing. He said, ‘Young man, there are 50 dollars missing.’

“The young man took on a hurt look. ‘Do I look like a thief?’ He himself called on passersby to witness this injustice. He made a passionate case of how he, an honest, hard working youth, returned the gentleman’s wallet without taking a cent and was now accused of being a thief.”

Pausing briefly for added emphasis, Dr. Why continued, “And here is where truth was fatally wounded. That young man, with tears in his eyes, asked the now sympathetic crowd, ‘Who would like to search me? If I’m a thief, I have the money, don’t I?’

“It worked. He wasn’t searched, but everyone believed him. The old man saw the crowd was getting nasty and he, not being dumb, mumbled, ‘Sorry, young man, I shouldn’t have said anything.’

“And that is how,” concluded the doctor, “the cops found truth crushed on the street.” Another pause. “And that poor old man, he’s the crook and the thief is the saint.

“A ten minute coffee break and I’ll see the next victim.”

True to custom, Dr. Why begins, “An interesting case...” Slowly he walks around the table, taking in details. Suddenly he stops, walks to the table and reads the police record. “A very interesting case! Very interesting indeed!”

Even the assistants, practically immune to surprise, sense something interesting in the air.

“As you will notice, our victim has numerous hematomas. There are no deep wounds. But here, let me open the victim up... There, see it? Very little blood. But look at those bruised organs. They finally shut down and death ensued.

“Ah,” says the doctor, “you are wondering what is so unusual about this. We see this kind of case quite frequently, don’t we?” Lowering his voice, the doctor continues, “Do you know where this victim was found by the police? Can anyone guess? (The assistants knew they weren’t expected to guess.) “This victim is from Mennoville...”

Dramatically extending his hands toward the battered victim lying on the table, the

doctor asks the question that he knows is jumping up and down in his assistants minds. “Who did it?”

“Our victim was slain by his own people!” he explained.

“Here’s what happened. A group of ladies were chatting. The subject was whether it pays to raise a garden. Some thought it did, others that it didn’t. One of them, Agnes, said, ‘I think a garden is a good thing, but for me it just wouldn’t work.’

“The other ladies agreed that for her it wouldn’t work. They knew that this particular family was having a real struggle financially and that because of this she helped her husband every spare moment in his cabinet shop. The other ladies agreed that the help she gave her husband doubtlessly brought in considerably more money than a garden possibly could.

“Now, pay attention to what happened. That same day, one of the ladies from that group, we’ll call her Lady A, got on the phone and spent an hour talking with her good friend, Lady B (who wasn’t part of the original group). She told about their discussion on gardens and added, ‘Would you believe that Agnes said that for her a garden just wouldn’t work. I thought if anyone needed one, she would be on the top of the list.’

“Now notice,” says Dr. Why, “those are the exact words that our victim used. But, that’s where the truth received two blows. First, she only quoted part of the truth. Second, she gave an opinion that did not agree with the sentiment of the group, and which she herself probably didn’t feel at the time. But now on the phone, she just couldn’t resist the temptation.

“Lady B, an impassioned gardener, was appalled by such heresy. Within 15 minutes she was on the phone ‘pouring her heart out’ to Lady C. ‘What can we do to help poor Agnes?’ she asked. ‘You know what a hard pull they are having, and yet she refuses to have a garden. She says a garden just doesn’t work. Now I ask, what kind of influence is she going to be on other mothers in our neighborhood?’

“That was another blow. The idea transmitted to Lady C was that Agnes was anti-garden, which by no means was the case.

“The following day was particularly bad for our victim. Lady C was sitting around a quilt with a half dozen other ladies. She herself brought up the subject. ‘Do you know, there are some things I just don’t understand. Now take Agnes, for example. You know what a struggle they are having. Yet she has come right out and said that a garden is too much work. Can you imagine someone in her situation saying something like that?’

“You see,” explained Dr. Why, “the original wording of our victim is fairly intact. It’s just that the word work has been stomped on. It’s true that not all the ladies around the quilt swallowed that story. Only three of them did. But it was enough. By now ladies A and B had shared their “concerns” with others. For D and E and F it wasn’t even a concern when they got on the phone later on in the day to tell how their quilting had gone. Words like lazy, poor management, free loaders, made the wires fairly buzz, as each one took a swing at our victim.

“The day that Agnes found out about the stories that were circulating, she was

especially tired. Her children had the mumps, company showed up unexpectedly, a water pipe burst in the attic...

“The cause of death?” The doctor looks inquiringly at each assistant, knowing full well they won’t say peep. “The cause of death? Ah, this is difficult. Very difficult. As you know, the folks living in Mennoville are non-resistant. They don’t go to war. They don’t put up a fight if someone tries to harm them. They don’t go to law. They like to say they are a harmless people. Do harmless people bludgeon the truth until it lies in the streets? Do they?”

Picking up his dictaphone, Dr. Why rapidly describes his findings. He concludes by saying: “Cause of death . . .” and here he pauses. He switches off the recording device. His findings will be analyzed in court, so they must be accurate. Moments pass. Suddenly he pulls off his gloves, heads to his desk and picks up a little black book, which he consults briefly. Then he dictates, “ ‘Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.’ Cause of death: Disregard for 1 Pedro 1:22 by victim’s sisters.”

It’s lunch time. For one hour there is a deathly silence in the morgue.

Returning from lunch, Dr. Why does his third autopsy, takes a quick break, and prepares for his fourth and final victim for that day.

“An interesting case... but can this be coincidence? Another victim from Mennoville. What is happening in that part of town?”

Dr. Why carefully looks over the victim extended on the table. “You don’t see anything abnormal, do you?” he asks. No answer.

His trained eye does. He works rapidly pointing out this and that. These findings, together with the police report, tell the story.

“When the police found the victim lying in the street, way out on the other coast, they saw no marks of violence and suspected it might have been a natural death, a heart attack, a stroke, or something of that nature. But that wasn’t the case at all. He died of poisoning.

“Here is what happened: A car traveling down a highway hit a patch of ice, slid into the other lane and hit an oncoming car, which lost control, rolled twice, and landed in the ditch on its wheels. All the occupants were wearing their seat belts and the vehicle was equipped with airbags. Even so the driver had both legs broken. His wife, on the passenger side, had a deep cut in her arm and lost a lot of blood. Their oldest daughter and youngest son, in the back seat came through it with just a few scratches. The other two children were staying with their grandparents.

“Since this was a well-known family in Mennoville (where everyone knows everyone), news of the accident spread fast. Within 24 hours there were at least 24 versions of what had happened. We will trace just one of these, ah . . . stories.

“1—The State Troopers on the scene of the accident called the grandparents and told them their children and grandchildren had been in an accident. They gave out two bits of information: one, everyone was alive, two, to which hospital they were being taken.

“2—The grandparents (the two other children were spending the day with friends) got to the hospital shortly after the ambulance arrived. All four of the patients were being treated in the emergency ward. The only word they got from nurses was that everyone was alive and that the parents would soon be going into surgery.

“3—The grandparents called the people where the other two children were staying and asked them to tell them that their parents and brother and sister had been in an accident. They didn’t know how bad it was, but it appeared the parents were hurt the worst.

“4—This couple, while getting the two children ready to go to the hospital to see their family, had time to call several others and tell what had happened. The final words were, ‘We don’t know how bad it was, but we hope they all live.’

“5—This message was transmitted as, ‘They were all injured and we don’t know if they will live.’ Now that was the first shot of poison. You see, something that is true agrees with both the facts and the spirit of the facts. In this case, the person knew a few facts, that there had been an accident and that all were in the hospital. The final statement, ‘we don’t know if they will live,’ was a misconstruction of ‘we hope they will all live.’ Actually, the two children only had a few scratches and weren’t in any kind of danger.

“6—The next call: ‘Oh, did you hear the awful news! The Whites have been in a terrible accident with all of their children. They don’t expect them to make it.’ Another dose of poison. First of all, it never crossed the person’s mind that maybe not all the children were along. Second, ‘they don’t expect them to make it,’ was a mushrooming of ‘we don’t know if they will live.’

“7—Armed with this distressing information, this person called someone who had fourth-hand information and found out one of the family had lost a lot of blood through a severed artery in the arm, the message hit the wires as: ‘Isn’t it terrible! How could something like this happen? Mr. White had his arm practically severed and even if the doctors manage to save his life, it’s almost certain he will lose his arm.’ Two more injections of poison. One, the person just assumed the driver would naturally have the worst injuries, and two, a severed artery was now an almost severed arm.

“8—Another phone rings. ‘Have you heard about the Whites? They had a bad accident. Mr. White had his arm amputated. With four children in the back seat and only three seat belts, you can be sure that at least one of them is in critical condition—if not dead.’

“9—Another phone... so you have heard... So the car rolled? . . . Yes, it’s really sad. One of the children, I assume the youngest, is dead. He wasn’t using his seat belt and very likely got thrown out when the car rolled. Mr. White lost his right arm...’ It’s just assumed that it’s the right arm that is lost when something like this happens.)

“Now, how did it all turn out? The children were OK. Mrs. White lost a lot of blood, but came through surgery fine. Three days later she was out of the hospital. Mr. White’s legs were more of a problem, but doctors feel that within several months he will be walking without crutches.

“This case is interesting because no one trod on the truth with bad intentions. No

one stabbed the victim, like in our first case today. But the truth of the matter is that their testimony wouldn't stand in court. Why? (It's because of this oft asked question that our good doctor got the nickname of Dr. Why.) Because they weren't telling the truth. I repeat truth is truth. When truth shows up in a morgue, it really doesn't matter if the victim was stabbed in the back or slowly killed by poison. Contrary to the surgeon who meets with relatives and says, 'He's in bad shape, but there's hope,' once someone has hit the morgue, I can't go out and give even a speck of hope. Death is final."

Changing back into his street clothes, Dr. Why invites his assistants into the lounge. After they are all seated, he begins. "I am amazed. Some of my colleagues from other cities tell me they are astounded by the amount of victims they are seeing who have been found in the streets of places similar to Mennoville. They all agree the Menno folks are quite well spoken of. They are an honest hard-working people. But, they are very careless with truth.

"These colleagues tell me that when they ask them to explain their non-resistant position, they quote passages like, 'Thou shalt not kill' or 'If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.' They are very careful to not kill people, but when it comes to the truth, their non-resistant stand seems to be breaking down. And worse, they tell me, when they see the truth wounded in the street, they, like the priest and the Levite, pass by on the other side of the road.

"When they see the truth stretched out on the road, half dead, why don't they do like the good Samaritan? Why don't they pour wine into the wounds and bind them up? But no, they have gotten the idea that it's OK to take one more swipe at the poor fellow. Or to dump a bit more poison on him. Then when truth hits the morgue, they go around all bleary eyed saying it sure is too bad what happened. They can't seem to understand that they are the guilty ones.

"Unless those folks turn into good Samaritans with the truth, we're going to be having a busy schedule." ▲

*Recently standing in line in the supermarket, I overheard the check out girl dourly tell the carry out boy, "You are just like married life . . ." The rest I didn't understand.*

*When my turn came, I asked the girl what she had told the boy. Flashing me a broad grin, she explained, "When these carry out boys hire in, they do everything to please. But once the newness wears off, you can't get anything out of them, just like it happens in married life."*

(Is your married life like the carry out boys in the supermarket?) ▲

## A Story

### **Two Colts Who Chose Differently!**

[The missionary from Goiânia, Cameron Goertzen, faxed me this story, which I translated and printed in our Mensageiro.]

The following vision, given to a minister one day, may help you to better understand

the Lord's dealings with those who choose to submit to Him, and you will also better appreciate why His discipline in your life is so important.

On a dirt road in the middle of a wide field stood a beautiful carriage, something on the order of a stagecoach, but it had beautiful carvings and was all edged in gold. It was pulled by six large chestnut horses, two in the lead, two in the middle and two in the rear. But they were not moving and I wondered why. As I continued to look I saw the driver underneath the carriage just behind the last two horses' heels. He was working on something between the front wheels of the carriage.

I thought, "My! He is in a dangerous place! If one of those horses kicked or stepped back they would kill him. And what if they decided to go forward or got frightened somehow and pulled the carriage right over him!" But he didn't seem afraid, for he knew that those horses were disciplined and would not move until he told them to move.

The horses were not stamping their feet or acting restless. And though there were bells on their feet, the bells were not tinkling. There were also pom-poms on the harness over their heads, but the pom-poms were not moving either. The horses were simply standing still and quiet, waiting for the voice of their master.

As I watched the harnessed horses, I noticed two young colts coming out of the open field. As they approached the carriage, they seemed to say to the horses, "Come and play with us! We have many fine games. We will race with you. Come catch us . . ."

And with that the colts kicked up their heels, flicked their tails and raced across the field. But when they looked back and saw the horses were not following, they were puzzled! You see, these colts knew nothing about a harness and could not understand why the horses did not want to play.

Again they seemed to call to them, "Why do you not race with us? Are you tired? Are you too weak? Do you not have strength to run? Do you not like to play? You are much too solemn. You need more joy in life."

But the horses answered not a word, neither did they stamp their feet or toss their heads. They just stood quiet and still, waiting for the voice of their master.

Once again the colts called back to them, "Why do you stand in the hot sun? Come over here in the shade of these nice trees. See how green the grass is? You must be hungry. Come and feed with us. You look thirsty. Come drink from one of our many streams of cool, clear water."

The horses answered them with not so much as a glance! They stood still, waiting for the command to go forward with their master.

And then the scene changed. I saw lariat nooses fall around the necks of the two colts. They were led off to the master's corral for training and discipline. How sad they were as the lovely green fields disappeared. Soon they were put into the confinement of the corral with its brown dirt and high fence. The colts ran from fence to fence seeking freedom, but found that they were confined to this place of training.

Next I saw the trainer come to work with them. He had a whip and a bridle. What a drastic change for these colts who had been accustomed to complete freedom! They

could not understand the reason for this torture, this terrible discipline. What great crime had they done to deserve this? Little did they know of the responsibility that was to be theirs when they had submitted to the discipline and learned to perfectly obey the master. All they knew was that this training was the most terrible thing they had ever known.

One of the colts rebelled under the training and said, "This is not for me. I like my freedom, my green hills, my flowing streams of fresh water. I will not take any more this confinement or terrible training." So he found a way out, jumped the fence and ran happily back to the meadows of tender, green grass!

I was astonished that the master let him go and went not after him. Instead, he devoted his attention to the remaining colt. This colt, though he had the same opportunity to escape, decided to submit his own will to the master and to learn his ways.

Now the training got harder than ever, but the colt was rapidly learning more and more how to obey the slightest wish of the master, and to respond even to the quietness of his voice. I then realized that had there been no training, there would have been neither submission nor rebellion from either of the colts. For in the field they did not have the choice to rebel or submit. You might say they were innocent. But when brought to the place of testing and training and discipline, only then was made manifest the obedience of one and the rebellion that lay hidden in the heart of the other.

For a moment I pondered. It just might be safer to not come to the place of discipline because of the risk of being found rebellious. But then I realized that without this discipline and training there could be no reward either.

Finally this period of training was over. Was the submissive colt now rewarded with his freedom and sent back to the wide open fields? Oh no! Instead a greater confinement than ever before now took place as a harness dropped over his body. Now he found there was not even the freedom to run about the small corral, for in the harness he could only move where and when his master spoke. And unless he spoke, he stood still.

The scene changed and I saw the other colt standing on the side of a hill, nibbling at some grass. Then across the fields, down the road came the master's carriage, drawn by six horses. With amazement the colt saw that in the lead, on the right side, was his brother colt. He was now strong and mature because of the good corn in the master's stable.

Looking closely, he saw the lovely pom-poms shaking in the wind, noticed the glittering gold bordered harness above his brother, heard the beautiful tinkling of the bells on his feet. Envy came into his heart. He complained to himself, "Why has my brother been so honored and I am neglected? They have not put bells on my feet, nor pom-poms on my head. The master has not given me the wonderful responsibility of pulling his carriage, nor put about me a gold bordered harness. Why has he chosen my brother instead of me?"

As I watched, the Lord seemed to say, "Because one submitted to the will and



discipline of the master, and one rebelled, thus has one been chosen and the other set aside.”

Then I saw a great drought sweep across the countryside. The green grass became dead, dry, brown and brittle. The cool, fresh streams of water dried up, and there was only a small muddy puddle here and there. I saw the little colt (I was amazed that it never seemed to grow or mature) as he ran here and there across the fields looking for fresh streams and green pastures. But he found none! Still he ran, seemingly in circles, always looking for something to feed upon. But there was a famine in the land, and the rich, green pastures and flowing streams of yesterday were not to be had.

One day the colt stood on the hillside on weak and wobbly legs, wondering where to go next to find food, and how to get strength to go. It seemed like there was no use, for good food and flowing streams were a thing of the past. And to make matters worse, all his vain efforts to find food only taxed his waning strength.

Suddenly he saw the master’s carriage coming down the road again. There was his brother, fat and strong, muscles rippling, sleek and beautiful with much grooming. He was much perplexed and amazed. He cried out: “My brother, where do you find the food to keep you so strong and fat in these days of famine? I have run everywhere in my freedom searching for food, but I find none. Where do you in your awful confinement find food in this terrible time of draught? Please tell me for I must know.”

Then the answer came back from a voice filled with victory and praise: “In the confining limitation of my master’s stables he feeds me by his own hand. His granaries are never empty and his well never runs dry.”

Now, what does this vision say to us? Surely among all of His children, that is, those who are called according to His purpose, God can choose only those for special service who are willing to be disciplined and taught. It is one thing to be called, and yet another thing to be chosen.”

In Matthew 20:16 we read, “...the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.”

It seems that in nearly every family circle there are those who cannot see the value of discipline, or the reason for learning obedience. Many young folks imagine that their parents are merely imposing their desires for their own selfish interests. While this might sometimes be true in the earthly family, though it is not likely, we can be sure that God never puts His children into His bridle or harness just to make life miserable for them.

We must always see the wisdom in God’s ways. As the carriage driver must have horses that are completely trustworthy in every situation, so God must have disciplined sons who have proven themselves completely faithful. While the way of discipline may, for the moment, seem grievous, yet it will surely work for good to those who love the Lord, who are called according to His purpose.

And it is not just the good it will bring to those who are disciplined. God’s larger purpose in disciplining us is that we might help others. In every generation God has had those who accepted His training and preparation—those who have become a

“team” in His hand. Such persons have learned to find their nourishment and supply in God alone, and thus they are able in the time of spiritual famine and trial to give nourishment to others who are in need.

We ask: How many are called to this way of discipline? If we understand God’s Word aright, He is saying that “many are called.” All through the Scriptures those who come to know Christ in salvation are considered to be “the called.” But among the called, there are only a few who accept God’s training and discipline. These few become “the chosen.”

It is not that God has arbitrarily chosen some and rejected others. It is by complete submission to God that young colts determine how usable they are. ▲

## B/N Tour

by Yvonne Martin

### **Our Trip to Paraguay and Iguacú Falls**

[As reported last month, part of the tour group and some of the Colony residents took a trip to Paraguay and Iguacú Falls.

Since some 50 years ago Edwin Schmidt spent some time in Paraguay on an MCC mission, he was especially anxious to visit the Mennonite Colonies that he helped establish. But because of complications that Yvonne will tell about, the group wasn’t able to reach these Colonies.

Edwin, how about writing up your story and sending it to me? Readers would be most interested in your experiences.

*The italics are my comments. Oh yes, Yvonne is 15 years old.]*

December 1—We left the Monte

Alegre church at 2:00 p.m. in the sleeper bus that came out to pick us up. Then when we got to Rio Verde, we parked at the bus station and stayed there till 5:00 o’clock while the folks from the Nacional bus line were working on some kind of papers to authorize the bus to get into Paraguay.

We finally got going and drove all the way to the Trevão, in the state of Minas Gerais, where we had supper.

“Trevão” means “Large Junction.” A number of highways merge here, including the one to São Paulo, so as can be imagined, it is a very busy place.

Gloria Holdeman and I sat in the back of our very nice bus and acted like stewardesses. We served mineral water to the passengers and collected junk.

December 2—We drove all night, stopping several times, once in São José do Rio Preto, at the very station where Luiz Batista works. I was surprised to see him and I’m sure he was surprised to see us.

This was a happy coincidence. Luiz, one of our members from the Mirassol, S.P.

## Brazil News

mission, works nights in the station where the bus stopped. He has been a real asset to the work there. Recently he was out for the Brazil Annual Meeting—in his own car, a nice VW station wagon.

We ate breakfast in Maringá, in a nice restaurant in the southern state of Paraná. We boarded the bus again and John L. Becker led us in devotions. When we finished, our new bus driver came aboard, introduced himself, and we continued our trip. He was a very good driver.

We ate dinner somewhere along the road.

We got to Foz de Iguaçu, the city located next to the falls, around 5:00 p.m. We headed straight out to the falls. The water was really high. The falls are just awesome. A plume of mist continually rises from the Devil's Throat. Part of the trails where we walked were drippy wet and covered with brown moss. We got soaked with spray on the walk over the water. It felt good because it was sorta hot. There were a lot of Spanish speaking people there.

After looking at the falls, we headed to our hotel, the Florença. It's really a nice place. Then we headed to Pizza Hut. We had some choice food there.

It felt good to sleep in a stationary bed again.

December 3—We woke up expecting to leave for the Chaco in the afternoon. Then we heard a startling bit of news. The papers we waited for for nearly three hours in Rio Verde wouldn't get us into Paraguay. So we held a conference in the lobby. What were we going to do now? It was decided we would drive 1½ hours into Paraguay to the first Mennonite Colony in a common bus.

The next thing on the agenda was the Itaipú hydroelectric plant. So we called our bus and then we waited and we waited. Finally it came and we got in on the 10:00 o'clock film. They showed the dam during construction. Then we all got in our bus and drove over the dam. There was one spillway going. That was impressive. The whole place is massive.

The Itaipú dam is the largest in the world in terms of electricity generated. Built on the Brazil-Paraguay border as a joint-ventura, Brazil buys up most of the electricity.

We all trooped to McDonalds for dinner. It's custom in Brazil that bus drivers don't pay for their meals. To eat at McDonalds for him was a new experience.

Poor guy.

After dinner we all drove to the Expresso Nacional bus headquarters and switched to a Paraguayan bus. It was kinda sad to leave our nice bus. I think we were very spoiled by now.

It took us an hour to cross the bridge into Paraguay. It was solid with cars going in. Our driver was Paraguayan and the people at customs seemed to know him, so we sailed right through.

This bridge is called the "Friendship Bridge." The "Contraband Bridge" would come a lot closer to telling the truth. Most of the traffic, both in vehicles and on foot, is to buy black market items to be sold in Brazil—black market, because they usually go way over their legal limit.

The country in general wasn't as poor as I had expected. The road was pretty smooth, but a ways past the border the shoulders ended, so it was very narrow.

We got to Paul Eichorns at 4:30 p.m. They and their son Mark and his wife Priscilla took us on a tour of the colony. It looked quite Mennonite. We stopped at a cute little clinic. They deal mostly with maternity cases. They deliver around one baby a day. Last of all we stopped at the Campo 9 supermarket.

We got back to our hotel for supper.

December 4—Since our bus couldn't leave the country, we rented two vans and crossed over into Argentina. That side of the falls was beautiful. We saw quite a few rainbows in the spray. Then a group of us decided to take a boat ride. That was just a blast. The boat was very powerful and that driver took us so close that we got soaked.

We visited a huge gift shop full of everything imaginable—rocks, metalwork, leatherwork . . .

Then we all rushed to the hotel and got ready to leave. We once again filled up at McDonalds.

Oh me, oh my.

Then we headed out. We ate supper in Campo Mourão.

We drove all night and ate breakfast at the Trevão in Minas Gerais.

Got to Rio Verde for dinner. And that is the end of my story!

Those of the tour group who went on this excursion were: Clayton & Anita Yost, David & Juanita Ensz, Edwin & Dorothy Schmidt, Emery & Rose Yost, John & Minnie Becker, Randell & Terri Ensz.

Those from the Colony were: Alma Penner, Daniel & Betty Martin and daughter Yvonne, Clifford & Naomi Warkentin, Ann Miller, Walt & Alberta Redger, Caleb & Joanne Holdeman and daughter Gloria.

There have been some very favorable comments about traveling together on a bus. Since the bus is quite roomy, it creates an excellent opportunity for people to learn to know each other. ▲

## Curitiba

### **A New Frontier?**

Curitiba—pronounced coo-ree-CHEE-ba—is the capital of the southern state of Paraná. According to the January 98 issue of the Canadian edition of Reader's Digest, "Curitiba is a model for the first world, not just for the third." Recently on the Colony there has been an unusual amount of interest in this city of 1.5 million inhabitants. Why? There are several reasons:

(1) There are quite a few Mennonites living around and in Curitiba. At different times they have come to visit us. Most of these Mennonites have been assimilated by the world. And yet there is a lingering conviction amongst us that surely in some hearts there must still be a longing for something deeper.

(2) In BN no. 69, we spoke about a man by the name of Roberto Amorim who came in contact with the church in Goiânia some years ago. We lost contact with him and then several years ago we got a letter from him. He was still interested. He was present in our 97 General Annual Meeting in Brazil, and now again in 98. He sees real opportunity in Curitiba for our people, not only to spread the Gospel, but also for making a living.

That may sound strange. With farming doing as well as it is, with a new colony in Mato Grosso, with farming opportunities in the area of the Pirenópolis congregation, as well as other areas, why should we be looking for more opportunities?

It's important to remember that very few Americans have jobs on the Colony. And if they do, they are probably just getting started and their objective is to be on their own as soon as possible. This would appear to be a paradisiacal situation. And maybe it is. But it tends to create a mentality that ownership is a requirement for success. This is unfortunate because when the Lord hands out talents, he gives to some the ability to be a good owner (master) and to others the ability to be a good hired man (servant.) But when this mentality reigns, there is a tendency for the servant to direct all of his efforts to becoming a master—and then live miserably ever after.

It would be very beneficial if some of our people could have a job and yet have a livelihood similar to those who have their own operation. According to Roberto Amorim, this possibility definitely exists in Curitiba.

(3) If I'm not mistaken, nearly 90 percent of the world population is concentrated in cities. Yet in our mission efforts, we tend to set up camp in villages or semi-rural areas. Certainly for those of us who were raised on farms, it's easier to adapt to this type of situation. The thought of living in a large city can almost make us frantic.

So what about the people who live in Paris, London, Hong Kong and São Paulo?

In particularly fierce battles, military doctors are often swamped with far more patients than they can possibly take care of. Some of the patients have suffered only light wounds, some are badly wounded and others are dying. Who do they take care of first?

Our first response probably is: those who are dying. It makes sense, but there is a problem. They are the ones who will demand the most time from the doctors, and even with the best of care (which often leaves a lot to be desired in field hospitals), the mortality rate will be high. So the tendency is to let the high-risk patients die and concentrate on the middle group, the ones who, contrary to the lightly wounded, cannot be ignored and stand a good chance of surviving and eventually returning to battle.

But what a responsibility to—shall we say— play God!

Even though we shudder at the responsibility of letting someone die so that another with a better chance to live can live, there is a certain logic to this approach.

But what would we think if the doctors would begin with the easiest patients first and work their way up? The dying would all die and the badly wounded would be dying before they got to them.

On both the battlefield and the church's mission program, there is no easy solution to some problems. What have we gained if we send a missionary with growing children

(and many fall into this category) to a large city if in the end they lose their own family? So we send them to a small village instead. Soon everyone knows about the missionary. Several sincere souls accept the gospel. Few others show any interest. In the end the missionary is tied down with—it sounds sort of bad—a baby sitting job. We are afraid that if we pull out and make only occasional visits, they'll all lose out. So reluctantly we fall into this routine. At times the missionary hardly knows how to keep busy.

In the meantime the dying are dying in the large cities. And so are the badly wounded.

Many of our missionaries are young couples with young children. There are a lot of pros to this. It's an age during which health is usually quite good and there is a lot of energy to get out and work. The children are a real asset in that those coming to the church get a front seat view of child training in actual practice. Younger missionaries learn a foreign language much easier than someone older.

However as we have mentioned, to send a couple with growing children to a large city just doesn't seem quite right. So what do we do? Write the masses off and stick with the villages? That may be our only option.

But is it?

By the time most couples hit their middle 50s, their children have left home. Why not tap these couples? Not all young missionary couples have children. Why not make an effort to reserve them for larger cities?

Back to Curitiba. There is growing conviction here that we should do something in that city. There is a good chance a missionary couple will be sent there. But there is also a feeling it would be good if some couples could move down and make their living there.

Doing what? Let's mention just one field that is wide open. Cabinet making. Almost all cabinets installed in houses are prefab jobs. Most are poorly made. When they are specially made, it is rarely, if ever, done by someone specializing in cabinet making. Discussing this with Roberto Amorim, he too believes there is real potential in this area.

To get something like this going, we need an experienced cabinet maker from N America to help get the shop going and train others.

There is no reason why we couldn't get into mechanic work. Or construction. Or...

The list goes on.

Next month we hope to have some statistics on the city of Curitiba. For those of you who have access to the Canadian Reader's Digest, read what it has to say. ▲

## **This & That**

Congress has approved and the president has sanctioned, a new set of traffic laws for Brazil which will go into effect toward the end of January. Stiff fines for traffic violations, as well as loss of driver's licence and jail sentences for repeat offenders, are part of the package. Studies show that 90 percent of all infractions are committed by five percent of the drivers. And that is where the challenge is. Unless these five percent have a real repentance experience, they will all lose their driver's license or land in jail.

## Brazil <sup>15</sup> News

Will authorities have the courage to do what needs to be done? More on this in several months.

The Colony has really been blessed with visitors lately. Beside the tour group, the following have been here: Tony & Pat Friesen and children, from Manitoba; Kendall & Sherilyn Hibner and children, from Georgia; Wanda Holdeman and daughters, from Georgia; Steve & Becky Redger and children, from Kansas; Rosa Koehn from Wisconsin, and granddaughters Corrine Koehn and Monica Friesen; Dennis & Vera Loewen and children, from N Dakota; Darrin & Ramona Burns and daughter, from Ohio; Gin and Lois Kaminski from Ohio. We're still not tired of visitors.

Richard & Edith Mininger were to Kansas, where Richard helped hold meetings at the Burns Congregation.

Joan, Mrs. John Unruh, spent Christmas in Halstead with her parents, Jonas & Bertha Buller, who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

Luiz & Maria Duarte and daughter Lucélia returned from the Acaraú mission in the Northeast, after spending several months there.

Walt & Alberta Redger are spending some time here bringing their farming operation up to date.

Roberto & Lucia Amorim and children from Curitiba spent a month on the Colony. Since he is a professional exterminator, we had a meeting with him in which he explained how to get rid of ants, roaches, mice and rats. He also explained the dangers involved in working with insecticides and what kind of precautions should be taken.

The Monte Alegre junior sewing girls made stuffed toys which were distributed to the children in one of the hospitals in town, together with cheer bags which different families put up.