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Editorial

The Hearing Ear

The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them.
—Proverbs 20:12

Humanity is geared to daylight. Men work during the day and sleep at night. Offices, businesses, stores, schools operate during the day, or maybe in the evening, but close for the night. There are some, of course, that function around the clock, but are the exception and not the rule.

Most legitimate activities and enterprises are carried out during the day for the simple and obvious reason that we are more efficient than when working in the dark.

Children are often terrified by the night. A strange noise that during the day might go unnoticed, can cause them to go white with fear at night.

Nighttime and darkness represent the unknown, danger, and even death. Of all the comforts of life, possibly none is equal to a cozy, secure house that shuts out the night.

We learn to cope with routine darkness. We build our lifestyle around the light and seldom give it a second thought. Rare indeed is the one who is able to cope with unexpected darkness: headlights suddenly failing on a narrow road, a blackout while walking on a back street, a blinding flash of lightning followed by a sharp crack—and pitch darkness…

Naturally speaking, we are creatures of light. That which we can't see we fear.

Yet there are those for whom it is always night. We who have perfect or near perfect eyesight try to imagine what it would be like to be blind. We are told that their other senses become more acute, that they see with their ears and their hands. So we close our eyes and listen carefully, but our ears give us no special direction; we palpate with our hands, but for fear of getting them smashed or burned, we quickly open our eyes. "It must be awful to be blind," we conclude.

In recalling her childhood, Karrey Lindenberg assumed that her mother, who was blind, saw with her hands—and saw nothing strange about this. She would color a picture and ask her mother to look at it. "How beautiful!" she would say. "No," Karrey would insist, "Come look at my picture with your hands." Her mother would then lovingly run her hands over the picture and again exclaim how beautiful it was. This is what thrilled her heart.

One day Karrey's mother placed a plate of cookies on the table. She decided to take one without asking. Very quietly she took a cookie and began munching on it while leaving the room. Her mother reached out and drew her close and requested that next time she ask for a cookie, and that she could eat all she wanted. How did her mother know she had snitched a cookie? She heard her chewing.

As she grew older, Karrey began to understand what it meant to be blind. With this came a deep admiration for her mother. One day, when 17, her mother was feeling her hair to see how long it was. Karrey remarked to her mother that she really didn't know what she and her siblings looked like. "Of course I do!" she said, and then went on to explain how she was able to "see" them. She told of how she held Karrey when she was born and felt every inch of her body.

Ten years later Karrey was married and had her own child. As she remembers her childhood, she says, "Sometimes I'd like to turn out the lights, hold and touch him, and see if I can feel all the things my mother felt."

When the Lord drew up the plans for the ark, He knew what He was doing. We're sure of that. Even so we can't help but wonder about what kind of lighting arrangement they had. In a time when there was no electricity, no pressure gas lights, probably only simple open wick lamps, it would have required hundreds of these lamps to create even a dim light throughout the vessel. (And to keep them stocked with oil, the wicks trimmed and burning, would have taken most of their time.) The one skylight must have been more for ventilation than for light, at least during the first 40 days. So unless the Lord has some special lighting system we don't know about, that ark must have been a dark, dark place. Surely Noah and his sons must have carried oil lamps with them as they tended to the animals. How this enormous ship was operated for a number of months without a compass, charts or any other navigational aids, without a rudder or sails, indeed without so much as a small observation deck, is a mystery that only eternity will reveal.

As you read these words, there are dozens, maybe hundreds, of huge submarines cruising far beneath the surface of the sea. Since a submarine is by nature a war machine, we can be assured they aren't merely putting in mileage or trying to burn up tax payers' money in vessels that can cost close to a billion US dollars each for the most advanced nuclear models.

Submarines don't have a single window or viewing port, barring the periscope which is operational only when about to break surface. Submerged, these boats are totally and absolutely blind. Yet they, like Karrey's mother, can see far more than we can possibly imagine, cruising in the utter darkness of the depths of the sea.

American intelligence knows exactly how many submarines rival nations have in their navies, their characteristics (how many torpedoes or missiles they carry, plus a host of other technical specs), and in most cases, their exact location. An intense effort is made to constantly monitor the activities of these subs. This is done by satellite, by surface vessels, and especially by stalking submarines.

When Jules Verne unleashed his imagination to write *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, he fell far short of describing today's nuclear submarines and their ability to "see" underwater. He had no concept of sonar, which can be described as "seeing by hearing."

The game of cat and mouse played by these underwater behemoths is a deadly game. The crumbling of the Iron Curtain, the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the thawing of cold war glaciers have not effected activities beneath the waves, where subs outfitted with MIRVs, programmed to spread destruction on Western targets, are ever prowling—and being stalked by killer subs, ready to go into action on a moment's notice. (The opposite is also true. Missile-laden Western subs are prepared to launch their scorpions on enemy targets.)

Yet this entire game is being played in total darkness. How?

Sonar.

Twenty-four hours a day, 60 minutes an hour, and 60 seconds a minute, sonarmen wearing headphones, are seated at consoles, analyzing the noises of the sea. They identify the sounds of the deep. They identify whales and what they are doing. Schools of fish. They "see" everything.

They clearly see *and identify* the enemy. That is the work of the sonarman wearing the headphones. Since no two propellers produce identical acoustical resonance—called a "signature"—a good sonarman (and most are very, very good) can quickly give a detailed description of the vessel, just by listening to the propeller wash. If he is unfamiliar with a particular signature, he can resort to his computer library, which has recordings of the signature of most subs, and by comparing what he is hearing with what is on tape, make an identification.

They know the exact speed, bearing and depth of the enemy craft. They know when torpedo tubes are flooded in preparation to firing, they know how many torpedoes or missiles have been fired, their speed and bearing. They know exactly how much time they have to take evasive action.

They know when the cook drops a skillet in the galley. They know when something goes wrong aboard the enemy sub, when there is an explosion. I'm not positive on this, but I believe American intelligence knew about the explosions aboard the Kirsk before its Russian handlers did.

All this is impressive, but we can be sure that their finest skills are carefully guarded secrets, which we may never know.

The gift of prophecy.

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy…" If someone were to suddenly

flash these words of the prophet Joel at you and ask why our sons and daughters aren't prophesying, what would you answer?

We think of prophesy as the ability to see into the future and make predictions. Hopefully this isn't the extent of prophecy, for if it is, then we need to come up with some explanation for why our sons and daughters aren't prophesying. I like to think of prophecy as the ability to see in the dark.

To comprehend this concept of prophecy, first of all we must understand that what the world today calls light, or enlightenment, is what the Word of God calls darkness. Hence a strange mathematical formula: The gloom of darkness is inversely proportional to the degree of "enlightenment." Or in simpler terms: The greater the enlightenment, the greater the darkness.

Secondly, we must comprehend that this darkness is everywhere. It is a penetrating darkness, similar to that of the final plague in Egypt. One by one the street lights of fundamental churches are flickering and going out. The beacon lights of great evangelists like Finney, Sturgeon and others, no longer brighten the sky. The gloom is palpable. It is everywhere. Men and women boldly walk about in the *darkness of "light."* As they desperately search the earth and the universe for their origin, they believe they will find the key to knowledge and longevity, and eventually to immortality.

The Christian, on the other hand, knows where he came from and is firmly convinced that soon the earth on which he stands will be dissolved in fervent heat. He knows that as the curtain drops on time, another shall rise, revealing eternity—and the final judgment of every soul that has ever breathed.

At times the Christian is almost overwhelmed by the constant bombardment of neutrons of darkness. At times he places his hands in front of his face and sees nothing.

Then he falls on his knees, and sees.

A Christian mother. For convenience sake, let's call her Mrs. Lindenberg. Mrs. Lindenberg has several small, well-behaved children. Lookers-on believe she is a very successful mother. She, on the other hand, sees herself in a different light. When her little boy begins pouting because she told him that he must clean out his plate to have dessert, it would be so much easier to say, "Well, just this one time, but next time you have to eat *everything*, do you hear?" Instead, when the pouting shows no sign of abating, she arises from the table, takes the child to the bedroom and applies the necessary discipline. When she returns to the table her food is cold (and just as well, for she has lost her appetite).

What Mrs. Lindenberg has just done is a direct violation of all that modern educators teach, and possibly even a violation of civil laws. So why does she do it? Folks, because that woman is a prophet. She can look into the future and see what that four year old boy will be like when he is 24, if his will isn't brought into subjection.

We admire blind Mrs. Lindenberg for the way she was able to raise her family. Much more we should admire spiritual Mrs. Lindenberg for her ability to see in a dark, dark world. Do our daughters prophesy? Indeed they do! In these last and dark days, they see the future with 20-20 vision.

Times are especially dark for young men. Many hold jobs and work shoulder to shoulder with men and women whose shame has taken wings. They openly discuss that which is fermenting in the their reeking hearts. Their mouths are foul, their words unrepeatable. Yet these young men, like sonarmen in a submarine, navigating in deep, black water, are able to distinctly hear the cries of these men and women as they scream in the depths of hell. And like Joseph, they flee temptation.

We are amazed by what modern technology can accomplish in a nuclear sub, but we should be much more amazed at our young men who can grow and prosper surrounded by darkness. Do our sons prophesy? Indeed they do!

But not all.

Not all our sons and daughters have night vision. Not all are Mrs. Lindenbergs. Not all are sonarmen. Not all of their parents have night vision. There are grandparents who have difficulty seeing and hearing in the darkness.

The prophet Joel didn't say, "Your preachers and deacons shall prophesy," or "Your missionaries shall prophesy." He didn't say, "If you want to be a worker in the kingdom, you will have to prophesy." If the prophet would suddenly show up some Sunday morning and have the sermon in our local congregation, he would probably say, "Never have I seen such darkness as today. These truly are last and perilous times. The soul that has no night vision, that can't "see" in the dark, will surely die."

Night vision is not an option. It's not a plus. It's not something to strive for. Night vision is to the Christian what the sonarman is to a submarine. It is an absolute must. Night vision is prophecy. It is the ability to see the future and like Joseph, choose to see clearly in the darkness of prison rather than stumble about in the light of Potiphar's palace.

[*The following article, by Tolstóy, is long. Really too long. But it teaches such a profound lesson on what happens when we lose our night vision in material things. Read it as a continuation of this editorial.***]**

A Story

By Tolstóy

How Much Land Does a Man Need?

This is the story of Pahóm, a Russian peasant, whose only trouble was that he had not land enough.

Close to Pahóm's homestead there lived a lady, a small landowner, who had an estate of about three hundred acres. She had always lived on good terms with the peasants, until she engaged as her steward an old soldier, who took to burdening the people with fines. However careful Pahóm tried to be, it happened again and again that now a horse of his got among the lady's oats, now a cow strayed into her garden, now his calves found their way into her meadows—and he always had to pay a fine.

Pahóm paid up, but grumbled, and, going home in a temper, was rough with his family. All through that summer, Pahóm had much trouble because of this steward; and he was even glad when winter came and the cattle had to be stabled.

In the winter the news got about that the lady was going to sell her land, and that the keeper of the inn on the high road was bargaining for it. When the peasants heard this they were very much alarmed.

They tried to arrange for the Commune to buy the whole estate, so that it might be held by them all in common. They met twice to discuss it, but could not come to any agreement. So they decided to buy the land individually, each according to his means; and the lady agreed to this plan.

Pahóm and his wife put their heads together and considered how they could manage to buy some of the land.

They had one hundred roubles laid by. They sold a colt, and one half of their bees; hired out one of their sons as a labourer, and took his wages in advance; borrowed the rest from a brother-in-law, and so scraped together half the purchase money.

Having done this, Pahóm chose out a farm of forty acres, some of it wooded, and went to the lady to bargain for it. They came to an agreement and he paid her half the price down and promised to pay the remainder within two years.

So now Pahóm had land of his own. When he went out to plough his fields, or to look at his growing corn, or at his grassmeadows, his heart would fill with joy. The grass that grew and the flowers that bloomed there, seemed to him unlike any that grew elsewhere.

So Pahóm was well-contented, and everything would have been right if the neighboring peasants would only not have trespassed on his corn-fields and meadows. He appealed to them most civilly, but they still went on: now the Communal herdsmen would let the village cows stray into his meadows; then horses from the night pasture would get among his corn. Pahóm turned them out again and again, and forgave their owners, and for a long time he forbore from prosecuting any one. But at last he lost patience and complained to the District Court. He knew it was the peasants' want of land, and no evil intent on their part, that caused the trouble; but he thought:

"I cannot go on overlooking it, or they will destroy all I have. They must be taught a lesson."

So he had them up, gave them one lesson, and then another, and two or three of the peasants were fined. After a time Pahóm's neighbours began to bear him a grudge for this, and would now and then let their cattle onto his land on purpose.

About this time a rumour got about that many people were moving to new parts.

"There's no need for me to leave my land," thought Pahóm. "But some of the others might leave our village, and then there would be more room for us.

One day Pahóm was sitting at home, when a peasant, passing through the village, happened to call in. He was allowed to stay the night, and supper was given him. Pahóm had a talk with this peasant and asked him where he came from. The stranger answered that he came from beyond the Volga, where he had been working. One word led to another, and the man went on to say that many people were settling in those parts. He told how some people from his village had settled there. They had joined the Commune, and had had twenty-five acres per man granted them. The land was so

good, he said, that the rye sown on it grew as high as a horse, and so thick that five sweeps of a sickle made a sheaf.

Pahóm's heart kindled with desire. He thought: "Why should I suffer in this narrow hole, if one can live so well elsewhere? I will sell my land and my homestead here, and with the money I will start afresh over there and get everything new. In this crowded place one is always having trouble. But I must first go and find out all about it myself."

Towards summer he got ready and started. He went down the Volga on a steamer to Samára, then walked another three hundred miles, and at last reached the place. It was just as the stranger had said.

Having found out all he wished to know, Pahóm returned home as autumn came on, and began selling off his belongings. He sold his land at a profit, sold his homestead and all his cattle, and withdrew from membership of the Commune. He only waited till the spring, and then started with his family for the new settlement.

As soon as Pahóm and his family arrived at their new abode, he applied for admission into the Commune of a large village. Five shares of Communal land were given him for his own and his sons' use: that is to say—125 acres (not all together, but in different fields) besides the use of the Communal pasture. Pahóm put up the buildings he needed, and bought cattle. He was ten times better off than he had been. He had plenty of arable land and pasturage, and could keep as many head of cattle as he liked.

At first, in the bustle of building and settling down, Pahóm was pleased with it all, but when he got used to it, he began to think that even here he had not enough land. Pahóm wanted to sow more wheat; so he rented land from a dealer for a year. He sowed much wheat and had a fine crop, but the land was too far from the village—the wheat had to be carted more than ten miles. After a time Pahóm noticed that some peasant-dealers were living on separate farms, and were growing wealthy; and he thought:

"If I were to buy some freehold land and have a homestead on it, it would be a different thing altogether. Then it would all be nice and compact."

So Pahóm began looking out for land which he could buy; and he came across a peasant who had bought thirteen hundred acres, but having got into difficulties was willing to sell again cheap. Pahóm bargained and haggled with him, and at last they settled the price at 1,500 roubles, part in cash and part to be paid later. They had all but clinched the matter, when a passing dealer happened to stop at Pahóm's one day to get a feed for his horses. He drank tea with Pahóm, and they had a talk. The dealer said that he was just returning from the land of the Bashkirs, far away, where he had bought thirteen thousand acres of land, all for 1,000 roubles. Pahóm questioned him further, and the tradesman said:

"All one need do is to make friends with the chiefs. I gave away about one hundred roubles' worth of dressing-gowns and carpets, besides a case of tea, and I got the land for almost nothing."

Pahóm inquired how to get to the place, and as soon as the tradesman had left him, he prepared to go there himself. He left his wife to look after the homestead, and started on

his journey taking his man with him. They stopped at a town on their way, and bought a case of tea, and other presents, as the tradesman had advised. On and on they went until they had gone more than three hundred miles, and on the seventh day they came to a place where the Bashkirs had pitched their tents. It was all just as the tradesman had said. The people lived on the steppes, by a river, in felt-covered tents. They neither tilled the ground, nor ate bread. Their cattle and horses grazed in herds on the steppe. They were quite ignorant, and knew no Russian, but were good-natured enough.

As soon as they saw Pahóm, they came out of their tents and gathered round their visitor. An interpreter was found, and Pahóm told them he had come about some land. The Bashkirs seemed very glad; they took Pahóm and led him into one of the best tents, where they made him sit on some down cushions placed on a carpet, while they sat round him. They gave him tea and kumiss, and had a sheep killed, and gave him mutton to eat. Pahóm took presents out of his cart and distributed them among the Bashkirs, and divided amongst them the tea. The Bashkirs were delighted. They talked a great deal among themselves, and then told the interpreter to translate.

"They wish me to tell you," said the interpreter, "that in return for your presents they will gladly give you as much land as you want. You have only to point it out with your hand and it is yours."

The Bashkirs talked again for a while and began to dispute. Pahóm asked what they were disputing about, and the interpreter told him that some of them thought they ought to ask their Chief about the land and not act in his absence.

While the Bashkirs were disputing, a man in a large fox-fur cap appeared on the scene. They all became silent and rose to their feet. The interpreter said, "This is our Chief himself."

Pahóm immediately fetched the best dressing-gown and five pounds of tea, and offered these to the Chief. The Chief accepted them, and seated himself in the place of honour. The Bashkirs at once began telling him something. The Chief listened for a while, then made a sign with his head for them to be silent, and addressing himself to Pahóm, said in Russian:

"Well, let it be so. Choose whatever piece of land you like; we have plenty of it."

"And what will be the price?" asked Pahóm.

"Our price is always the same: one thousand roubles a day."

Pahóm did not understand.

"A day? What measure is that? How many acres would that be?"

"We do not know how to reckon it out," said the Chief. "We sell it by the day. As much as you can go round on your feet in a day is yours, and the price is one thousand roubles a day."

Pahóm was surprised.

"But in a day you can get round a large tract of land," he said.

The Chief laughed.

"It will all be yours!" said he. "But there is one condition: if you don't return on the same day to the spot whence you started, your money is lost."

"But how am I to mark the way that I have gone?"

"Why, we shall go to any spot you like, and stay there. You must start from that spot and make your round, taking a spade with you. Wherever you think necessary, make a mark. At every turning, dig a hole and pile up the turf; then afterwards we will go round with a plough from hole to hole. You may make as large a circuit as you please, but before the sun sets you must return to the place you started from. All the land you cover will be yours."

Pahóm was delighted. It was decided to start early next morning. They gave Pahóm a feather-bed to sleep on, and the Bashkirs dispersed for the night, promising to assemble the next morning at daybreak and ride out before sunrise to the appointed spot.

Pahóm lay on the feather-bed, but could not sleep. He kept thinking about the land.

"What a large tract I will mark off!" thought he. "I can easily do thirty-five miles in a day. The days are long now, and within a circuit of thirty-five miles what a lot of land there will be! I will sell the poorer land, or let it to peasants, but I'll pick out the best and farm it. I will buy two ox-teams, and hire two more labourers. About a hundred and fifty acres shall be plough-land, and I will pasture cattle on the rest."

At last he saw that the dawn was breaking.

He got up, roused his man and went to call the Bashkirs. "It's time to go to the steppe to measure the land," he said.

The Bashkirs got ready and they all started: some mounted on horses, and some in carts. Pahóm drove in his own small cart with his servant, and took a spade with him. When they reached the steppe, the morning red was beginning to kindle. They ascended a hillock and dismounting from their carts and their horses, gathered in one spot. The Chief came up to Pahóm and stretching out his hand towards the plain:

"See," said he, "all this, as far as your eye can reach, is ours. You may have any part of it you like."

Pahóm's eyes glistened: It was all virgin soil, as flat as the palm of your hand, as black as the seed of a poppy, and in the hollows different kinds of grasses grew breast high.

The Chief took off his fox-fur cap, placed it on the ground and said:

"This will be the mark. Start from here, and return here again. All the land you go round shall be yours."

Pahóm took out his money and put it on the cap. Then he took off his outer coat, remaining in his sleeveless undercoat. He unfastened his girdle and tied it tight below his stomach, put a little bag of bread into the breast of his coat, and tying a flask of water to his girdle, he drew up the tops of his boots, took the spade from his man, and stood ready to start. He considered for some moments which way he had better go—it was tempting everywhere.

"No matter," he concluded, "I will go towards the rising sun."

He turned his face to the east, stretched himself and waited for the sun to appear above the rim.

The sun's rays had hardly flashed above the horizon before Pahóm, carrying the spade over his shoulder, went down into the steppe.

Pahóm started walking neither slowly nor quickly. After having gone a thousand yards he stopped, dug a hole, and placed pieces of turf one on another to make it more visible. Then he went on; and now that he had walked off his stiffness he quickened his pace. After a while he dug another hole.

Pahóm looked back. The hillock could be distinctly seen in the sunlight, with the people on it, and the glittering tyres of the cart-wheels. At a rough guess Pahóm concluded that he had walked three miles. It was growing warmer; he took off his under-coat, flung it across his shoulder, and went on again. It had grown quite warm now; he looked at the sun, it was time to think of breakfast.

He sat down, took off his boots, stuck them into his girdle, and went on. It was easy walking now.

"I will go on for another three miles," thought he, "and then turn to the left. This spot is so fine, that it would be a pity to lose it. The further one goes, the better the land seems.

He went straight on for a while, and when he looked round, the hillock was scarcely visible and the people on it looked like black ants, and he could just see something glistening there in the sun.

"Ah," thought Pahóm, "I have gone far enough in this direction, it is time to turn."

He stopped, dug a large hole, and heaped up pieces of turf. Next he untied his flask, had a drink, and then turned sharply to the left. He went on and on; the grass was high, and it was very hot.

Pahóm began to grow tired: he looked at the sun and saw that it was noon.

"Well," he thought, "I must have a rest."

He sat down, and ate some bread and drank some water; but he did not lie down, thinking that if he did he might fall asleep. After sitting a little while, he went on again. At first he walked easily: the food had strengthened him; but it had become terribly hot, and he felt sleepy; still he went on, thinking: "An hour to suffer, a lifetime to live."

He went a long way in this direction also, and was about to turn to the left again, when he perceived a damp hollow: "It would be a pity to leave that out," he thought. "Flax would do well there." So he went on past the hollow, and dug a hole on the other side of it before he turned the corner. Pahóm looked towards the hillock. The heat made the air hazy: it seemed to be quivering, and through the haze the people on the hillock could scarcely be seen.

"Ah!" thought Pahóm, "I have made the sides too long; I must make this one shorter." And he went along the third side, stepping faster. He looked at the sun: it was nearly half way to the horizon, and he had not yet done two miles of the third side of the square. He was still ten miles from the goal.

"No," he thought, "though it will make my land lopsided, I must hurry back in a straight line now. I might go too far, and as it is I have a great deal of land."

So Pahóm hurriedly dug a hole, and turned straight towards the hillock.

Pahóm now walked with difficulty. He was done up with the heat, his bare feet were cut and bruised, and his legs began to fail. He longed to rest, but it was impossible if he meant to get back before sunset. The sun waits for no man, and it was sinking lower and lower.

"Oh dear," he thought, "if only I have not blundered trying for too much! What if I am too late?"

He began running, threw away his coat, his boots, his flask, and his cap, and kept only the spade which he used as a support.

His breast was working like a blacksmith's bellows, his heart was beating like a hammer, and his legs were giving way as if they did not belong to him. Pahóm was seized with terror lest he should die of the strain.

The sun was quite low now, but he was also quite near his aim. Pahóm could already see the people on the hillock waving their arms to hurry him up. He could see the fox-fur cap on the ground, and the money on it, and the Chief sitting on the ground.

"There is plenty of land," thought he, "but will God let me live on it? I have lost my life, I have lost my life! I shall never reach that spot!"

Pahóm looked at the sun, which had reached the earth: one side of it had already disappeared. With all his remaining strength he rushed on, bending his body forward so that his legs could hardly follow fast enough to keep him from falling. Just as he reached the hillock it suddenly grew dark. He looked up—the sun had already set! He gave a cry: and was about to stop, but he heard the Bashkirs still shouting, and remembered that though to him, from below, the sun seemed to have set, they on the hillock could still see it. He took a long breath and ran up the hillock. It was still light there. He reached the top and saw the cap. Before it sat the Chief laughing and holding his sides. Pahóm legs gave way beneath him, he fell forward and reached the cap with his hands.

"Ah, that's a fine fellow!" exclaimed the Chief. "He has gained much land!"

Pahóm's servant came running up and tried to raise him, but he saw that blood was flowing from his mouth. Pahóm was dead!

The Bashkirs clicked their tongues to show their pity. His servant picked up the spade and dug a grave long enough for Pahóm to lie in, and buried him in it. Six feet from his head to his heels was all he needed. ▲

Trip Report

by Mrs. Earl Toews

Back to Lapa

[*Most people aren't aware that approximately eight months after the Colony was established, two families moved to southern Brazil, to the state of Paraná. They lived there for approximately a year and then returned to the States.*

The capital of the state of Paraná is Curitiba, a name that crops up in this little paper quite regularly.

Just recently we reported on a Mennonite World Conference that was held in Curitiba a number of years ago.

There are a lot of Mennonites in and around Curitiba. Some of the streets have Mennonite names. Nearby is the Mennonite Witmarsum Colony.

We have a mission in Curitiba. Roberto Amorim, the member from there, wrote an article for BN some time ago.

Finally, Curitiba, a city of two million, is considered to be one of the most advanced cities in Brazil, both culturally and economically.

When Earl & Patricia were visiting in Brazil recently, they bussed to Paraná and looked up the place where the Dick Toews and Jonah Dyck families lived. Now we will listen to what Patricia has to say.]

We left the Rio Verde bus station at 7:00 o'clock in the morning. It was a nice clean bus; no smoking was allowed.

After hearing so much about when the family lived in Lapa, a little town near Curitiba, we were finally on our way out there. After 30 years, would there be any reminders of the past?

We arrived in the bus station in Uberlândia, in the state of Minas Gerais, at 1:45 p.m., where we had to change busses. We were supposed to catch the 4:00 p.m. bus, but since it was late, we had a snack and handed out tracts.

The next bus was nice too. We only got a few winks of sleep that night. We changed drivers three times. The first two were good, but the last one seemed to be trying to make up for lost time, or something.

When it got light enough to see, we saw we were driving past mango and orange orchards. There were different kinds of pine trees, and together with this, sawmills, that really reminded us of San Juanito, Chihuahua, in Mexico.

We saw wheat fields and Holstein cows. The mountains were green and beautiful. When we saw a sign with SCHMIDT on it, we figured we must be getting near the Mennonites.

We had been told we would arrive about 6:00 a.m., but it was about 10:15. Mervin Loewen, the missionary, was there at the bus station waiting for us. Their home is about a half hour drive from there. It happens they are living in the part of town that Earl's family was acquainted with.

Norma Jean, Mervin's wife, had breakfast waiting when we arrived, after which we took baths, rested, and then had dinner. Teresa Hibner is the children's teacher.

After dinner we went to visit the neighbors. In the evening we all went to bro. Roberto and Lúcia's place. They live in a high rise apartment right in the middle of town. We had supper together and devotions before we left.

The following day we headed out to Lapa with Mervins. They had been wanting to visit the Witmarsum Colony for sometime, so our little trip worked right in. It rained almost all the way.

Earl knew in which direction they had lived from town, so we headed out hoping to

find the place. We stopped and asked for Mennonites and a man told us he had seen a church sign ahead. The hills are gentle and rolling. Earl remembered getting stuck on them with their load of things when they moved here. Now it was a good highway. He thought it must be around 10 miles, as they used to walk to town and back in one day.

We got to the church sign (General Conference) and Earl thought this must be on the right track, we turned off on a nice gravel road. By now we were all excited. We saw the church and some old houses and milk barns that weren't being used anymore. They all had the same basic design, which was confusing. We drove past a number of abandoned farmsteads. Suddenly he exclaimed, "This is it! There is the fence we built. That's how dad makes his corner posts."

A house had been added to the place. We drove on to what we were sure must have been Jona Dyck's house. There were maybe two or three places in between. We drove on till the road turned into a trail. We went to the barn where Earl had lived and the men went to the house. A lady came out and gave us permission to tour the barn.

Memories! They had lived in the front part of this barn. On the front porch we could still see the tile floor that Earl had helped lay. The stove mom had cooked on was still there. The boys always had to go around outside to get to the loft to sleep, but now there was a door from house to barn. I guess mom didn't want the cows coming into the house.

In the barn part we saw that over half of the stanchions were still standing. We climbed the stairs, that were nearly falling off the wall, to where the boys had slept in the loft. It was dirty and infested by rats and mice, but there were still some milk cans and lids strewn around. Earl showed us where he had slept on the floor with Jake Loewen the last night they lived there. Earl brought home a six inch piece of board as a souvenir.

Outside again we looked at the well they had dug by hand. It was covered with a big cement slab.

Out front was a beautiful scene. Awesome, really! Rolling hills. Green pastures. Dad had dreamed of raising cattle on those hills. Pine trees. If we had a congregation here, it would be the most beautiful in the conference.

When we left there, it was dinner time, but since there was no place to eat, we continued our tour. We went the way Earl remembered to the old big house where they and the Jona Dyck family lived together while building their barn. We had no trouble finding the place. At that time it was the only house on the farm. Now there were maybe 15. The yard was till the same. The fences were made of rock. The lady opened the house which was now being used as a church. Here we were standing in mom's kitchen again. The old wood stove looked like it must have been a good one. A lot of pancakes must have been made on it.

Finally we went to get some lunch in the next town on the way to the Witmarsum Colony. Earl paid only 25 reals (US$12.50) for all eight of us. It was a big dinner.

Then we headed for the Witmarsum Colony. We drove through forests, saw sawmills, rivers with rapids and waterfalls. It was truly beautiful. We drove around some on the colony. Their church was huge and had a steeple.

We looked up the man that dad had bought his dairy herd from. I think his name was Epp. When we got to his place, Earl immediately recognized it. He said, "This is where I got bit by a dog." The man remembered Earl's dad real well. They were about the same age. We could only visit in Portuguese or Spanish. Earl could still understand some German, but not enough to converse with the man. The lady had her hair in a bun and wore a dress, but most of these Mennonites dress just like the world. They had visitors from Switzerland.

Mervins paid the Siegford Epp family a visit. They served us faspa: zwiebach, cheese, rhubarb tarts, coffee, tea, chocolate milk and some meat.

We went home by a different route, arriving at 8:00 o'clock that evening. The next morning after breakfast one of the Mennonite Brethren, Abraham Dyck, came over to see Earl. They talked for some time.

After lunch bro. Roberto Amorim and his wife Lucy stopped by to tell us bye. Mervins took us to the airport. We flew to São Paulo, where we caught our international flight back to the US.

One thing that impressed us was that the church is in Brazil to stay. It was such a blessing to visit the congregations and the mission and get into so many homes.

Another thing that really impressed us was that Brazilians eat a lot of meat—and salty! We were treated like kings and queens wherever we went.

We are thankful to God for His keeping power and protection on the trip. ▲

This & That

My little one-liter VW Gol occasionally requires a bit of specialized attention. Since way back I have been a steadfast customer of our local VW agency. The last time I pulled into the reception area, it was a girl who came out to find out what was ailing my car. Call it machismo, or narrow-mindedness, or plain backwardness, but folks I feel more at ease talking to a man about my car's personal problems. I told the girl the air-cleaner was loose. The girl said she would get a mechanic to put things right. So while she was doing that I figured I would try and stimulate my salivary glands by making a quick tour of the showroom. Just about that quick a… a girl was there to sell me a new car. I did a quick scan of the area and saw that all the salesmen were women. "Oh man," I thought (Maybe I should have thought, "Oh woman…"), "that other gal is going to get a girl mechanic to fix my car." So I told the girl salesman that I wouldn't buy a new car and went out to where my car was. Yes, you guessed it, there was a girl under the hood of my car trying to fix my air-cleaner. It was evident she wasn't wanting to get her dainty hands looking all undainty, so she messed around. Finally a mechanic, a real male mechanic, showed up and got his hands dirty. I decided there and then that our local VW agency is going broke and that next time my vehicle became ill I would take it to some all-male clinic. Some time later a brake cylinder began to leak, so I asked Paulo at Vulcan, an all-male radiator

fixing place, if he could recommend someone who could fix my car. He didn't bat an eye. "Take it to the Our Lady of Aparecida Shop. They're good." He explained how to get there. It's just a small shop in a residential section of town. I was impressed by the place before I even pulled up. It was spotless, no dirty rags and used parts strewn around. I pulled in and a—yep, a man—courteously asked me how he could serve me. I told him. He called his male son to come and replace the left rear brake cylinder. In a jiffy he had the defective part replaced with a new one. I asked, "How much is it?" He said, "Twenty reals (ten US bucks)." That was for parts and labor and a real McCoy male mechanic. Even you folks in N America would enjoy taking your cars to the Our Lady of Aparecida Shop.

Will & Ann Miller made a quick trip to the US to attend her mother's funeral.

After a number of years of work, the first edition of the Portuguese Christian Hymnal is about to hit the press. Because of copyright complications, this first edition will have only 295 songs. Work will continue to secure permission for at least another hundred songs to be used in the next edition.

On Nov. 8, the funeral service for Amy, Mrs. Robert Holdeman, was phoned into the Monte Alegre church.

Marilyn Hibner's dad, Earl Litwiller, passed away. Marilyn and daughter Betty made a quick trip to the US to be present at the funeral.

Mark & Glenda Loewen and son Victor spent several weeks on the Colony. Marks are spending time in the Oroville Mission in California while seeking medical help for their son.

Norman & Alta Zimmerman spent several weeks with their children, Milferd & Sandra Loewen.

The land leveling project in Sorriso, Mato Grosso has shut down because of the rainy season. All the workers from the Colony have returned.

On Nov. 28 the Rio Verdinho youth put on a Strogonoff fund-raising supper to be able to buy Christmas food baskets for the poor folks in town.

Ministers Arlo Hibner and Antônio Oliveira were in the Northeast having meetings at the Patos and Acaraú missions. Min. Elias Stoltzfus and Dea. Harold Holdeman held meetings in the Goiânia mission.

It appears that approximately 60 chicken barns (25,000 birds each) will be put up on the Colony. Right now this project is in the bureaucratic stage. Actual construction will probably begin in March or April. With the exception of one who is planning on putting in 12 barns, the rest will be putting in four, which is considered a module. The price for four barns is approximately US$200,000.