

# Brazil News



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Editorial

## The Terrorist

While studying the recent Sunday School lesson taken from the book of Revelation, it was asked what the difference was between Satan being bound or loosed. A young married brother from the Rio Verde Congregation provided the answer:

“It’s like a terrorist who is put in prison. He loses his mobility and is restricted in what he can do, yet he continues to direct operations from his cell.”

So very true. Even while jailed, he has tremendous power.

As we take a quick look at history, we wonder how it can be said that Satan—the great terrorist—was ever bound. Unimaginably cruel despots, with total disregard for human dignity or life, extinguished lives and peoples without the slightest twinge of conscience, with the same detachment we feel when swatting a fly.

If Satan was bound, how could this happen?

Heathen armies sallied forth as mighty firestorms, leaving death and utter destruction in their wake.

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The *Martyrs Mirror* could well be called the *Mirror of Horrors*. Enemies of the cross committed the most terrible atrocities. Death was too good for the followers of Christ. Evil men took it upon themselves to give saints a touch of hell, until mercifully rescued by death.

If Satan was bound, how could this happen? And if Satan was indeed bound, then what kind of power will he exercise—or is he exercising—when loosed?

The book of Job gives us some interesting clues on this subject. Twice God authorized Satan to totally disrupt Job’s life: the first time socially (the loss of loved ones) and financially (the loss of his material goods), and the second time physically (the loss of his health).

The fact that Satan himself brought about these calamities adds to their severity, for

they were meant to destroy Job and his faith. We do well, however, to note that all that happened to Job was of a natural or physical nature. Also, that which he suffered was probably not as severe as what thousands upon thousands of martyr brethren suffered, some who had all their goods confiscated, were incarcerated in inhuman conditions, sometimes for months on end, and repeatedly tortured for their faith. Yet this happened during a period of history in which we believe Satan was not loosed. Consequently, when Satan was authorized to try Job, he wasn't being "loosed," according to the description in Revelation.

Again we ask, if Satan was bound, where did he get his power to wreak havoc on the earth for so many centuries?

To understand this incongruence, we must remember that Satan's grand plan goes far beyond inflicting natural or physical discomfiture. That is merely a means to an end. What he wants, above everything else, is to reduce souls to spiritual poverty, which places them on the fast lane to eternal destruction. While pain and sorrow give him a quick satisfaction, it is the death of the lost soul that fills his heart with morbid glee.

While in prison, Satan had at his disposal powerful tools. Strangely—and fortunately—as he loses his shackles, he also loses the use of these tools. Let's notice:

**Secular powers.** Satan often manipulated secular powers with the same ease that a puppeteer handles his marionettes. By controlling local and national authorities, in the guise of burgomasters, bailiffs, judges and executioners, he was able to strike terror to the heart of the masses. Untold millions were imprisoned and executed.

**Religious powers.** Heathen and fallen religions were powerful tools in the hands of the evil one. People today are shocked by the shameful scandals being exposed in a major world religion. It is exactly this religion that for many centuries cast pious men and women into prison. What we see today are but the feeble twitches of a moribund giant. When this corrupt body joined hands with secular powers, Satan's power seemed to be complete. But it wasn't. The plan backfired and today we see clearly that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church.

**Human ignorance.** In Satan's hothouse (no pun intended), seedbeds are fertilized with darkness and watered with ignorance. This fallen angel made hay with the masses who couldn't "discern between their right hand and their left hand." Terrible barbarities were commonplace as entire nations succumbed to cruelty and perversion.

With such power, was Satan bound?

Most certainly! He must have often rattled his cell door in uncontained fury as he beheld the negative results of his attempts to destroy God's spiritual creation. Yes, he was able to spill rivers of blood, but imagine his frustration as he saw this blood converging as so many rivulets and flowing onto God's holy altar, from there ascending to Heaven as a sweet smelling savor. From prison this beastly enemy had power over the body, but not over the soul. True, the power he held over the body far too often intimidated the soul, causing it bow to the forces of evil. But never did it succeed in delivering a fatal blow to the true faith once delivered to the saints.

Today a look into Satan's toolbox shows us how his modus operandi have changed. Down on the bottom we see a rusty dagger with a snapped blade, called Secular Power; we see a horribly contorted crucifix called Religious Power; and we see a worm-eaten black hood called Human Ignorance. These tools have seen little use of late.

We do, however, see some other items. Contrary to the bloody dagger, to the hypocritical crucifix and to the ominous black hood, all of which inspired terror or dread, he now has neatly wrapped little packages which he displays with the flair of a master salesman. His marketing is impeccable.

And what is in these little packages that attract the multitudes?

**Individual independence.** This is not to be confused with national independence, which is a legitimate desire felt by peoples since the beginning of time. Individual independence is the expression of a supposed right to do as one pleases, say what one pleases, believe what one pleases and to look as one pleases. Laws, both ecclesiastical and civil, are reduced to suggestions, to mere options. Everything is subjective. Abstract. There are no absolute values. What matters is how one happens to be feeling at a given moment. This engenders a pseudo-brotherhood in which everyone is right—except those who are right.

**Loss of fear and reverence.** Jesus told about a judge who feared not God nor regarded man. This judge, who for centuries was considered an icon of callousness and impiety, has today become a coveted standard. Crass jokes involving God and holiness bring on gales of laughter (God forbid that His people should ever laugh at such jokes, and much less ever be found guilty of repeating them). Casual clothes worn to religious activities so accurately portray the current attitude toward God.

A checkout girl my wife and I learned to know in the supermarket has for some time felt a need in her life. Recently she told us she attended a service in a traditional protestant church. An invitation was given and she showed her decision to give her life to Christ. Afterward, talking with the pastor, she asked if this meant no makeup when going to church. He assured her she could continue using makeup—in moderation. Would she have to change her way of dress for coming to church? No, so long as she didn't get too far out.

God has become a down-to-earth next-door neighbor. He's "one of the boys." (In fact, He is no longer He, but He/She.) The personal independence of which we just spoke includes God. As any good next-door neighbor, He must learn to keep His place with us, and we with Him.

There was a time in which man thought twice before doing evil, for fear of divine justice. Evildoers were lovers of the night. Today they love the day—broad daylight—for they *want* men and women to be aware of their vile deeds. Adulteresses in high places are conceded instant fame as their disgrace comes to light. They coyly look into TV cameras and relate their shameful deeds, as the nation hypocritically shakes its head.

Man has always sinned, but it has only been in the last 50 years that Satan has been

able to do a “show and tell” in the majority of the nation’s homes. Today the astounding thing isn’t so much the sins that are being committed (things were pretty rotten before the flood and in Sodom and Gomorrah), but the fact that most nations of the world, including Christian nations, deliberately permit (invite?) the evil one to be present in their homes and show explicitly what is happening in the gutters of this world, is more than shocking.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with television. It is one of the greatest inventions of all times. Our heart slips into overdrive as we think of its mission and revival possibilities. Alas, the cathode-ray tube shall never become converted nor sanctify itself. Thus only the converted and sanctified have power over this terrible plague.

**The destruction of family life.** Before electricity and the automobile, each evening the home spread its wings like a mother hen, as husband and children settled in for the night. This “mother hen” home has given way to the “night hawk” home, in which children—and all too often, parents—fly away as evening falls. Meal time is no longer together-time. With dad, mom and older children working out, many have fallen into the vicious circle of the girl who got a job so that she could buy a car so that she could go to work. The adage, “First we work and then we play,” is now: “First we play and then we work to pay.”

The disintegration of the family is to society what metastatic cancer is to an organism; it compromises moral values and precludes the possibility of better days ahead. It’s a terminal social malady.

As time goes on there will be less and less broken homes; there simply won’t be homes, in the traditional concept of the home, to break up. It is as if society itself has begun taking contraceptives that prevent homes from being born. (Possibly it would be more correct to say that society is taking the day-after pill; homes are conceived, only to shortly after die an abortive death.)

**Prosperity.** I asked the Portuguese brethren’s class which I was teaching what they would do if they were suddenly given a million reals (approximately 410 thousand US dollars). Those present ranged from accomplished farmers to a married brother who doesn’t even own a car. Yet most of them were able to give an almost instant answer as to what they would do with a large sum of money. I’m no exception. We concluded that money would change our vision.

Admittedly, the possibilities of such a windfall are very remote, so we’re probably safe—on that particular score, at least... But what is prosperity? Can it be measured in dollars and cents? Is it the vehicle we drive? The house or farm we possess? Is it the job we have?

Prosperity, in its most pristine acceptance, is a material sense of security. In aboriginal societies, the family in which the man was a good hunter, the woman a good grub digger, and both, together with the children, resistant to common diseases, was a prosperous family. In our society, it’s not how much we possess, but the feeling of security that envelops us that determines our prosperity. Thus the majority of us are prosperous.

Prosperity is not inherently wrong. The problem is that it tends to dull our hearing and befog our vision, which in turn make us more sensitive to the temporal than to the eternal. This makes Christian life an uphill battle. Instead of making material decisions bow to spiritual principles, the opposite occurs and the spiritual must give way to the material.

**Science.** Few things are harder on faith than modern science. Fifty, even ten years ago, positive statements were made: “God will NOT permit this” and “God will NOT permit that.” Today it’s happening. At least three women are to be carrying cloned babies. Scientists are working toward cloning cells of humans who died years or centuries ago, as of the so called Ice Man. God will N...forget it.

Satan is again making hay, showing us that man has it within himself, as he himself tried to prove in heaven, to become as God. Of all the little packages the evil one has in his tool box, this one contains one of his strongest potions. The results are everywhere, visible to those who want and to those who don’t want to see or believe. He doesn’t have to make long speeches. He need but say, “See...”

We repeat that the objective of this article is not to try and determine how bound or loosed Satan is today. Rather we return to the thought of the terrorist. Compared to what is happening today, September 11 was the mere burp of an infant. Everywhere we look we see planes crashing into homes, into churches, into cities, into nations...

We used to sing the song, “How much longer can it go?” On September 11, I was eating lunch in a restaurant. On the TV I saw the plumes of smoke rising from the twin towers, and then the terrible billows as they crashed to earth. In one corner were the words, “America Under Attack.”

America continues under attack. And Canada. And Brazil... On a figurative TV screen we see the words, “Planet Earth Under Attack.”

And, “Church of God Under Attack.”

Meanwhile we bustle about in our daily routine, oblivious of the smoke, of the debris falling around us, often striking and killing loved ones. We hardly mourn them, for we’re not even sure they are dead.

We read articles in which experts tell of what authorities can do to forestall future terrorist attacks. We appreciate the tremendous efforts that governments—especially the American government—are putting into this effort.

What are God’s children, also under attack in a different kingdom, doing to prepare themselves for the terrible day in which they live? Pictures published immediately after the September 11 show the terror stricken faces of those fleeing the cataclysm. We can’t even imagine people seated in a sidewalk café, or on park benches, amiably chatting as their surroundings were being destroyed by a terrorist attack.

We don’t know if Satan and his head angels have strategy meetings... But if they do, they must talk about the lean years when the worst they could do was attack God’s creation bodily. Someone remarks, “Things sure are easier today.” ▲

## The Colony

### Changes

Last month in the article *An Update*, we briefly mentioned that some of the Colony folks are thinking about moving to the neighboring state of Tocantins. There are also several families who are returning to the US. All this means changes.

Some changes are of a personal nature and have a minimal effect on others. Then there are changes that directly affect the lives of others, as in the case when a family, or families, decide to relocate. Not unusually, such a decision meets with skepticism, and even resistance.

To a point this is good. It would be uncomfortable indeed for a family to decide to relocate and everyone be happy to see them leave. Relocation means a breaking of ties, which is painful. On the other hand, it is possible, in spite of the pain, to see the logic of the move and feel it is of the Lord. When this is the case, the decision can receive good support.

The decision to relocate in Brazil is a bit more complicated than in N America. The Colony came into existence in 1968, when the first large tract of land was purchased. Additional tracts were purchased and by 1975 the Colony was of the appropriate dimensions it has today—or had until a month ago.

The purchase of these original tracts were not speculative ventures, but rather the result of prayer and deep searching. After all, to purchase land in a different country, in a different continent, in a different hemisphere, is not something to be undertaken lightly. In most cases, more land was purchased than what the purchaser felt to farm on his own. He was looking to future generations. This vision and unselfishness has been richly blessed, as the brief report, *An Update*, in the previous issue of BN will clearly indicate.

Rightly or wrongly, the spirit in which the original purchases were made has bestowed a certain sacrosanctity on what is today known as the Colony. It has, if you will, created a virtual Canaan. And just as the Jews hold tightly to their homeland, so we are loath to see this original land slip out of our hands, for several reasons:

First of all, Colony land today has two values. The first is a practical value that permits someone to purchase the land and expect to pay it off in a reasonable amount of time. The second is an artificial value—a speculative value—which is being paid by investors who don't depend on the returns from the land itself to make the purchase viable. This means that once the land is sold to outsiders, it will probably never be reclaimed, simply because the artificial price paid by speculators doesn't fit into the Mennonite pocketbook. Only time will tell us if selling to the outside will be a help or hinderance to the general progress of the church in Brazil.

Another reason for apprehension when land is sold to outsiders is the agricultural/social structure in Brazil. In N America, especially in what is known as the Bible Belt, farmers in general tend to be conservative and religiously inclined. They make good neighbors and in no way offer a threat to the Mennonite culture.

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The situation here in Brazil is different. The kind of buyer that is able to purchase land at current prices will hardly be conservative or religiously inclined—at least not by Bible Belt standards. There is a good chance he won't even live on the land. Hired men will be responsible for the day-to-day operation and the owner will show up sporadically, maybe weekly, or even monthly, if he lives in São Paulo or some other distant city. The farm house, very nice by local standards, will be his family resort, to which he will bring his friends and relatives. This isn't necessarily bad. The problem that can arise is the Latin culture and its propensity to *festas*—parties—which can become quite...well, unBible-Beltish. The prospect of this kind of activities right in our community isn't especially comforting.

On the other hand, we recognize that new people moving in, especially the hired men, give us the opportunity to witness. As has happened so many times, they could get converted and become one of us. We hope this will be the case....

So far as settling in new areas in Brazil, we are very much in favor. I know of no more economical and practical method of mission work than evangelization through colonization. Lessons learned on the Colony should prove valuable to future settlements.

The Tocantins project is breaking new ground. Three families are seriously interested, with several others also showing some interest. Contrary to the original Colony and the Mato Grosso settlement, where a number of families agreed to settle in the same area, there is not this banding together in the new project. Chris Stoltzfus, from the Rio Verdinho Congregation, has sold his land and purchased a place in Tocantins. He is fully aware that the other two families will probably purchase some distance from there, maybe up to a hundred miles. This is hardly an ideal situation for a congregation or for a school, and which raises eyebrows.

I was having lunch in a restaurant in town the other day when Chris came and joined me at my table. Without any preamble, we began discussing his project. He is totally aware of the implications of settling in an area that may leave him stranded without other families. He feels the Lord has opened the door at this place because of souls who need exposure to the gospel. He is also aware that he may take a financial beating if things don't pan out, and is prepared for this. The location is excellent; only three kilometers from a highway. A house in the small neighboring town came along with the farm he purchased. They plan on initially living in town, which will give them a greater opportunity to witness. I hope this project works out, for if it does, we may have the formula for a novel type of mission work.

And what about the families moving back to the US? Visitors who see their setups here can't imagine why they are leaving prosperous farms and moving to an economy in which it will almost certainly be more difficult to make a living than here.

The answer is actually quite simple. They feel they will be happier elsewhere. That's about the long and short of it. It's a feeling we must respect.

Why will they be happier elsewhere? Because not everyone has assimilated the Brazilian culture. To be happy in Brazil, one must cease to be a foreigner.

Interestingly, even some children born and raised here are foreigners at heart. Such families will be happier in N America. Once again, this is a right we must respect.

Not only must we respect this right, but we must recognize that they have made a very positive contribution to the work here in Brazil. They are leaving, not defeated, but with their mission accomplished. We can but wish them Godspeed. I expect that from now on there will be a constant trickle back to N America.

This benign attitude does not necessarily extend to staff members wanting to leave. Once again the logic is clear. We are desperately understaffed. With five congregations, two with no staff members, and five missions under our care, even with our present staff, it is very difficult to keep the ball rolling. Contrary to N America, where everyone speaks the same language and there can be an interchange of ordained personnel, for a minister or deacon to be truly useful here, he must be relatively fluent in the Portuguese language.

Even so, those who are leaving are doing so with the blessing of the congregation, with an open door to return and be useful in the work here. We appreciate immensely the contribution they have made.

Will all this moving change the chemistry of the Colony? Over a period of time, very likely. One can only live in a foreign country so long... Either one changes countries or customs. To attempt to be a permanent foreigner is the perfect formula for frustration. ▲

## News from the Rio Verde School

by *Elsie Joann Silva*

### **Easter Activities**

Our school was invited to sing Easter songs at the Escola Bom Pastor (Good Shepherd School), which is a school for handicapped children.

Two of our school board members, José Luiz and Paulo David, went with us.

When we arrived, the director explained to the children why we were there. As we took our places, the children applauded.

We began by singing *Cortaram Madeiro e Fizeram uma Cruz* and *Ressurreição*. Then Paulo David asked the children if they knew the meaning of Easter. One of the children answered, "It is the suffering of Jesus." Paulo went on to explain the meaning of Easter. The children were very attentive.

We sang some more songs. We taught them several songs and then they sang together with us. In the songs with motions, they would do exactly as we did.

I think the children understood the message of the songs. Paulo told them that Jesus has resurrected, is now in heaven and some day will return for those who served Him during this life. Then he asked all the children who want to go to heaven to raise their hands. Nearly all the children raised their hands. There were several handicapped women present. One of them said she didn't want to go to heaven. Another said, "I'm too old!"



Paulo took the opportunity to explain that in heaven everyone will be young and then they decided they wanted to go too. He explained that in heaven there will be no suffering and one of the children asked, “Will there be food to eat?”

There was a little boy, who appeared to be a Down Syndrome child seated on a mattress close to where we were. He was skinny and slightly bowlegged. As we sang, he took off his shoe and began hitting a little girl near him. One of the workers tried to get him to settle down, but he was insistent.

When we finished singing, I took his hand and asked him what his name was. He held my hand tightly and tried to get up. I felt so sorry for him as I saw the effort he put forth to walk on his weak legs.

There was another little boy in a wheelchair, who couldn't walk. He began sliding down and one of the workers had to reposition him, as he didn't have strength to do so on his own.

Some of these children were handicapped both physically and mentally; some only mentally, while others seemed to be almost normal.

In this school they learn crafts. We didn't have time to see all that they do, but one of these days we want to go back so that they can show us their crafts. The director showed us some paper they had recycled and we were amazed at how perfect it was.

There was one young boy seated up front who remained quiet the entire time, attentively listening to everything we did. His head was all scarred up because of the spells he has. The director couldn't believe how quiet he was while we were there.

This was a new experience for our students. We all enjoyed being able to tell these handicapped children about God. Sometimes we just ignore this kind of people, but God loves them just as much as He loves us. They need our love and care much more than normal people do. ▲

## Imagining Out Loud

### **Rip Van Winkle, 2002**

Many Mennonite children know how to drive a car and a tractor before they hit their teens. As they leave their teens they feel totally at home in heavy traffic and cruise down the freeway at 70 m.p.h. At the other end of the spectrum, my aunt, who is 90, is still an active driver and I don't believe there is a day her car stays in the garage, except, possibly, in a raging blizzard. World-over, tens of millions of vehicles hit the roads and streets every day. We take all this for granted. In fact, we don't “drive” our car; we interact; the steering wheel, the accelerator, the brake and other controls, become extensions of our hands and feet. We hop in, start the motor, drive to work, get out, without ever once making a conscience decision or thinking about what we're doing. Our brain directs our wheels with the same ease that it directs our feet.

And we think nothing of it.

The legendary Rip Van Winkle is to have slept for 20 years and awakened to find

himself an old man. We are going to reinvent Rip Van Winkle. This time he will have been born in 1776, the year the American Declaration of Independence was signed, and in 1802, when he was 26, he will surge ahead in time and spend 20 days in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, or more specifically, in the year 2002. Needless to say, when he returns to his slot in time, he will have much to say—enough to fill several books. We will, however, listen in on his description of modern travel, as he sits on his front porch, facing a dozen curious friends and neighbors. Notice that he refers to 2002 as if it were a place, and not a time. Also, the car which Rip tries to drive has a stick shift.

(Paragraphs in italics are questions asked by the listeners.)

...In 2002 people don't walk to the other end of town, like we do. To begin with, some of their towns, or rather cities, are so large that it would take two or three days to walk across town. They don't ride horses or donkeys, nor do they go anyplace by cart or stagecoach...

*So how do people travel?*

Everyone, or at least every family, has a car...

What's a car?

(Rip is silent for a long minute, obviously searching for words that will help them understand his description of a car. Finally he has an idea. He arranges four chairs, so as to represent a four-passenger car. He takes the front left chair, which makes him the driver, and asks others to take the remaining three chairs.)

Okay, now let's imagine this is a tiny room, just a bit wider than these chairs, but longer in front and in back. There are four doors so we can get in and out. Each door has a window and there is a window in front and in back, which means there are windows all the way around. The ceiling is low, maybe six inches above our heads. The space behind us is called a trunk; it is a space for luggage and other things people want to haul. The space in front of us is where the motor is...

*Motor?!*

Just a second, and I'll explain what a motor is. Underneath us there are four wheels. The front wheels turn, like on a buggy, except that they don't have wooden spokes with an iron rim. They run on...on...well, they call them tires. They're black, made out of what they call rubber, and they have air inside...

(Rip sees that his listeners don't have the slightest idea what he is talking about, so he gets back to the motor.)

A car isn't pulled by horses or mules or oxen. In the front part of the car, ahead of where we are sitting, there is a machine that makes the car go...

*And what makes this machine go?*

That's the interesting part. In the back part of the car, below and behind the back chairs, there is a tank. They put a liquid called gasoline in that tank and that is what makes the motor work.

(More blank looks.)

I see you aren't following me, so just think of that machine up front as a tiny iron

horse that is stronger than ten horses and never gets tired. The distance that a good horse will travel in a big day, will take a car only half an hour.

*So if this thing you call a car is “pulled” by a motor instead of a horse, how do you make it go? I don’t suppose saying giddap or whoa to a machine do much good, nor would spurs. Do you just pull the reins?*

(Laughing) I’m going to tell you something. It looks so easy to drive a car, well, just as easy as riding a horse. After I had ridden in a car a number of times, I said, “You know, I think I could drive one of these things. It looks like there’s nothing to it.”

Well, there is something to it. So much, in fact, that I believe from the bottom of my heart that only people in 2002 can drive cars. Our minds haven’t developed enough to make all the decisions that must be made to keep a car on the road.

Let’s get back to the horse. Once a horse has traveled a road several times and knows where you are going, you can travel for an hour or two, or more, without ever touching the reins. A car is entirely different. You can *never* let it go on its own. A car is mighty powerful and comfortable, but it doesn’t have a speck of brains. Unlike a horse that has horse brains, you have to furnish all the brains when you drive a car.

Okay, back to why there is no possible way we could ever learn to drive a car. The driver and I changed places and he gave me a class on the basics. He pointed to a little glassed-in area in front of the steering wheel where there were some little clocks—they call them gauges—and some little lights. He said, “That big affair over there, that’s the speedometer. It tells you how fast you’re going...” I looked and saw that it went from zero to 120 miles an hour. He said, “It’s not a good idea to go over 70 miles an hour...” I didn’t know how fast that was, so I asked him how fast a trotting horse goes, and he said between five and 10 miles an hour. Anyway, he pointed to another little clock that showed how much gasoline was in the tank and to another one that...well, I didn’t understand it at all, something about how many times the motor went around in a minute. Then he pointed to a certain place and said, “If that little red light comes on, it means the motor is low on oil. Stop immediately. If that one comes on, it means the motor is getting hot because it doesn’t have enough water. And if that light is on, it means the emergency brake is pulled. And that one over there means a door isn’t shut right...” The guy went on and on. There is no way a fellow can keep his eye on all that and drive at the same time.

Next he pointed to the floor. He said, “Do you see that pedal? That’s the brake. Any time you need to stop, step on the brake! I don’t care if you learn how to make this car go, but I want you to be absolutely sure you know how to make it stop.” Now he had me step on the brake several times, so I “would get the touch of it.”

Next he showed me another pedal to the left of the brake. He called it a clutch. He said I need to step on it when starting the car and to change gears. What does it mean to change gears? It means that there is a lever sticking out of the floor, sort of between the seats... But wait, I’m getting ahead of myself.

To make the car go, you’re supposed to pull the emergency brake—that’s another lever between the seats that you pull and the car won’t go anyplace. You pull the

emergency brake with your right hand, then you step on the clutch with your left foot, and then you let go of the emergency brake and take hold of the key behind the steering wheel. Now is when it gets complicated. To the right of the brake there's a thing you step on with your right foot that is called an accelerator. The harder you push, the faster the motor goes, and the faster the car goes. So here I am: My left foot is on the clutch, my right foot on the accelerator, my left hand on the key and my right hand on the steering wheel. My eyes are supposed to be watching that glassed-in area in front of the steering wheel *while*, I'm looking out of the front window to see where I'm going. I tell you folks, there is absolutely no way that our little horse brains can do all that. And there is still more to it. Like the guy said, "Rip, you have to constantly be on the lookout for a crazy driver. If you don't, you'll have a wreck. Keep your ears open. If something doesn't sound right, stop." I thought that was dumb, because not a solitary thing sounded right to me.

My buddy said maybe the lesson was a bit incomplete, but that he would talk me through the procedures. He said, "Now we'll start the motor. Step on the accelerator just a little and turn the key to the right to start the motor."

I did exactly what the man said and there was the awfulest noise you ever heard. Part of the noise was the guy yelling: "Release the key! Release the key! Let up on the accelerator!"

I'm going to tell you something. Flesh and blood like ours will never drive a car. With all that noise and yelling, I couldn't remember what was the accelerator. I couldn't even keep the key and the steering wheel straight. So I let go of the steering wheel with my left hand and kept the key cranked to the right. Instead of taking my foot off of the accelerator, I took it off of the clutch... The only reason I'm here to tell the story is that the emergency brake was pulled tight. That car bounced up and down, and made even worse noises, and then suddenly everything was quiet. I think the guy pushed my hand off of the key. I looked at him and he was looking straight ahead. I said, "Ah, I guess we didn't go too far, did we..." He didn't say a word. He just kept gazing out the front window. I looked where he was looking, but there was nothing to see. I looked him in the face, but his eyes were sort of glazed. I thought, "Man, I believe I'm up the creek..."

Finally the guy took a deep breath, got out his hanky and real shaky like wiped his forehead. I said, "I guess I sort of messed up a little bit." "We'll survive," he said.

These 2002 people are something else. I have never seen the like. All of a sudden that guy sticks his hanky back in his pocket and says, "Rip, old buddy, you have learned some important lessons and so have I. You are going to drive and I don't care if it takes us the rest of the day and the whole night. Let's start over."

This time we did everything in slow motion. He had me step on the accelerator real slow like. After I had gone about the thickness of the sole of my shoe, he said happily, "Fine! That's good. Hold it just like that. Next you will turn the key...but wait. When you hear that motor start, *release* the key."

I did it just right. He had me step on the accelerator just a bit and then take my foot off, just so I could get used to the noise of the motor. "Now," he said, "we're going to

drive the car. Okay, your left hand on the wheel.” I checked, and it was. “Your right hand on the shift lever.” I checked and it was. “Your left foot on the clutch.” I checked and it was. “Your right foot on the accelerator.” I checked and it was. “We’re all set,” he said, but I think I detected a slight tremor in this brave man’s voice. “Now, we’re going to do *one thing at a time*. Right now the shift lever is in neutral. I want you to gently move it right and left, just to get the feel of neutral.” I moved the lever left, maybe an inch, and hit something hard. So I took my hand off and whacked it a good one... Once again I thought my good man would go into a trance. Before I could see how things were to the right, he recovered. In a carefully modulated voice, he said, “Good! You have discovered the left extremity of neutral. If you were to gently push to the left, you would find a similar restraint. Now, once again, slowly...slowly (he said in the exact tone of voice we use when old Boss wants to kick while milking her and we say, ‘Sooooo, Boss, Sooooo, Boss), move the gear shift to the left, now, slowly, slowly, move it ahead.” I did. “Verrrrrry good,” he purred. The undisguised sound of victory was in his voice. “You are now in first gear.” It was a wonderful feeling. But alas, it was short-lived.

“Now we are going to actually drive,” he said. “Step on the accelerator just a bit more...no, no, not quite so much,... perfect. Hold it there. Now, with your left foot, slowly release the clutch...” I did as he said and slowly brought my left foot up, and at the same time, did the same with my right foot, that was on the accelerator. So, all of a sudden that car trembled, and then everything was absolutely quiet. The motor was quiet. I was quiet. My buddy was quiet.

Gallantly, he said, “Rip, your learning. Remember, you must release the clutch and *press down* on the accelerator. Now, we’re going through the “take-off” procedure (I don’t know why he said that) again, only this time, as you slowly release the clutch with your left foot, press down on the accelerator with your right. Then you’ll know the thrill of driving a car.” My buddy was soon to regret these words.

Since I had to let the clutch out all the way with my left foot, my horse brains just assumed, since my right foot was to do the opposite, that it should go all the way down...

I tell you folks, never in your life have you gone so far, so fast, in so short a time. The noise was out of this world. I don’t know how I ever heard my buddy shout, “STEP ON THE BRAKE! STEP ON THE BRAKE! YOU’RE GOING TO HIT THE DITCH...”

I’ll never know how I did it, but I stepped on the brake with both of my feet. I tell you, never in my life have any of you stopped so fast in so short of time.”

Once again everything was silent. The motor was silent. I was silent. My buddy was silent. I saw he was looking intently at something way out in space. This time he didn’t even manage to shake. After several minutes he said, “Again we have both learned important lessons. This time we shall succeed.” I could tell by the tone of his voice that he didn’t believe it any more than I did.

Again we went through what he now called the “launching procedure.” I should

have mentioned, we were out on a deserted road. Otherwise, I wouldn't be telling you this story. I got the car going in first gear and to my great glee, discovered that if I pressed on the accelerator a bit, the car would speed up. If I left off, it would slow down. I thought I was doing quite well, until my buddy said, "Watch where you're going! You're going to hit the ditch. Turn left! With the steering wheel! Turn leffffftt. STEP ON THE BRAKE!"

My buddy said it was good the ditch wasn't deep and it wasn't muddy. After he got the car back on the road and I was again installed in the driver's seat, he said, "You have to watch where you're going." I said, "But how, I can't watch all the little lights and the road at the same time." "What do you mean?" he said. "Just that," I said. You said if those little red lights came on, I had to stop or else..."

"Yes," he said, in a tired voice. "I did tell you that. Tell you what, just forget about those crazy red lights. This time you WATCH THE ROAD instead."

After what my buddy called a "successful launch," I drove down the road in first gear. He would say, "GENTLY turn left, or you'll hit the right ditch. Then he would say, "GENTLY turn right, or you'll hit the left ditch," until I caught on. All the terrible emotions of the past half hour left me and I craved more speed, so I stepped on the accelerator, more and more. And the motor got louder and louder. My buddy said, with just a quaver in his voice, "Rip, we're going to have to shift to second."

There I was, rushing along at 15 miles an hour, turning left and turning right, barely managing to stay out of the ditches, and my buddy wanted me to change gears. "Rip, it's really quite simple. Pay attention and I'll explain how it works. You will, of course, keep on steering. While you are steering, you will step on the clutch with your left foot—no, not yet; I'll give the word—take your right foot off of the accelerator, and then, with your left foot step on the clutch. Mind you, you might keep on steering through this entire procedure, with your LEFT hand. You will place your right hand on the shift lever, and GENTLY pull it down to where it stops. You must not try and coax it any further. Once you have engaged second, you will GENTLY step on the accelerator, WHILE you GENTLY release the clutch. Through all this you must continue steering..."

Now it was my turn to get the jitters. With trees and fence posts rushing past me at 10 m.p.h., I had a big order. At that speed, I couldn't take my eyes off the road for even a fifth of a second. My horse brain was working at one hundred percent capacity, and now I would have to steer with only my left hand, take my right foot off of the accelerator, without looking find the clutch with my left foot and step on it, and without looking find the gear shift with my right hand and gently bring it down into second. After performing this feat, I would have to reverse the procedure so I could drive in second, at an even greater speed.

My buddy saw I was shaking like a leaf. I think he was just about as scared as I was, but he put on a good show. "Rip, you can do it! You're doing great... Okay, here we go. Take your foot off the accelerator...good...step on the clutch... good...KEEP STEERING...g-g-g-ood... now with your right hand, pull the gear shift down..."

The noise was terrible. A grinding noise. In his little postmortem speech, my buddy said I released the clutch while the gear shift was in neutral, and that when I tried to get into second with the clutch out, I was flaunting a basic rule of driving with a stick shift. I didn't understand all that he said, I let him into the driver's seat so he could get the car out of the ditch, the right one this time.

When he started getting out so that I could resume my driving lesson, I said, "Whoa! Stay right where you are. From now on I'm the passenger. I'm in first gear and this thing has another four to go. Right now I'm on a deserted road with hardly any ditches. What happens when I have to drive 70 m.p.h. and meet cars driving at the same speed? What happens when I have to drive in town? Nope, I can't watch all the little lights and clocks on the dash of my car, remember to watch the rear view mirror, and at the same time remember to step on the clutch with my left foot, on the brake with my right foot, steer with my left hand, change gears with my right hand, remember to turn on the blinkers, listen to all the sounds that go with driving. I can't do it. Please take the wheel."

So ends our little story of Rip Van Winkle. Before you discount it as a clumsy attempt at humor, write a mental second chapter, and third, and fourth... Write about what it takes to fly an airplane. Write about what is involved in the launching of a space shuttle. Write about the surgeon who removes a human heart and replaces it with another. If you could regress 200 years and read your stories to the people back then, would they believe you?

Hardly. Everyone knew knowledge would increase as world goes into its final tailspin, but no one imagined life would reach its present form. Yet here we are. We at times feel just a bit uneasy, but our children take it in stride. We must teach them that this life will soon end. ▲

## **This & That**

April 2, the youth from the Monte Alegre Cong. served supper for the senior citizens. Richard Mininger spent several weeks on the Colony. There was a carry-in dinner at the Rio Verdinho Cong.

Danny & Mary Miller and a married daughter spent a short time on the Goiânia Mission, visiting their children, Arlen & Christina Wiggers, who are missionaries there. They also spent several days on the Colony.

José Luiz & Viviene Carvalho had a girl, Vanessa.

Dustin, Lynn & Kathy Schultz's son, is spending several months in Georgia.

Lee Koepl was out for a couple of weeks. He is keeping his permanent visa up by returning every two years. We hope that before too long he and his family come out to live.

April 27 was the Elias Stoltzfus garage sale.

The teachers have returned from the missions where they were teaching the missionary's children: Rosa, dau. of Leo & Mim Dirks, from the Curitiba Mission; Joetta, dau. of Tim & Deanna Burns, from the Patos Mission; Teresa, dau. of Arlo & Priscilla Hibner, from the Acaraú Mission.

This edition of BN is coming out over a month late. We apologize and will be working overtime to get back on schedule as quickly as possible.

John & Joan Unruh made a short visit to the Curitiba Mission.

Kitchen showers were held for Carlos & Iara Vieira, at the Monte Alegre Cong., and for Jerry & Vanusa Barros at the Rio Verdinho Congregation.

## FACTS & FIGURES

### Temperatures

High	35.0°C	95°F
Low	14.6°C	58°F
Av high	33.4°C	92°F
Av low	17.4°C	63°F

### Rainfall

25 mm — 1 inch

### Relative Humidity

Hi 80% — Low 57% — Av 66.5%

### Exchange Rate

One US dollar buys 2.53 reals



# Brazil News

# Brazil 18 News

# Brazil News

# Brazil 20 News

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# Brazil News

# Brazil<sup>23</sup> News

# Brazil 24 News



# Brazil News

# Brazil<sup>26</sup> News

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