

Brazil News



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Editorial

Two Compacts

It's a busy interstate, many lanes wide. Meandering, it gradually dips into a valley. So far as the eye can behold, there are cars—cars of every make, model and color. Some are new, some are old. There are vans, limousines and compacts. There are imports from every nation of the world. They're all traveling, some fast, some slow. Oh yes, before I forget, this is a one-way interstate, so almost all of the cars are traveling in the same direction, except for just a few that have turned around and are bravely bucking traffic, intent on returning. (More on that in just a bit.)

All of the cars traveling on this interstate—let's call it Interstate W—have one thing in common, a radio. This radio can be tuned in on only two stations, Station D and Station G. Contrary to normal car radios, it is possible to press a red button on the dash and make personal contact with the station that is on the air at that moment.

Out of the thousands and thousands of cars on Interstate W, we will zoom in on two of them. But let's back up a bit.

The owners of the two cars we are zooming in on have known each other since childhood. They're good friends. That's the reason they're traveling together on Interstate W.

These two youth, both are 18, have been traveling on this road for four years. Both are driving late model sports cars. They often talk together on their cellular phones.

Paul (answering phone): Hello.

Saul: Hi Paul, what are you up to?

Paul: Do you really want to know?

Saul: Of course.

Paul: I've been spending a lot of time listening to station D. When they're not blaring music at me, they're going on and on about all the advantages of traveling on Interstate W. When they say that it's a wide road, I agree. When they say that there is a

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lot of company on this road, I agree. But it's when they tell about all the rest stops along the way and how exciting they are, that's where I have my doubts.

Saul: This is interesting. I have been having some of the same thoughts. But keep on, I'm listening.

Paul: Frankly, I don't believe everything they say, so I pressed the red button on the dash. I wanted to ask some questions. You would almost think they knew what I wanted, because the only answer I got was music, louder than ever.

Saul: You didn't even get a recording?

Paul: No. That sort of upset me. All of a sudden I decided to switch to channel G. Saul, when I did that, something stirred way down deep inside of me. Instead of the blaring music, I heard quiet singing. It was beautiful, but even so I began feeling even more uneasy. On impulse I hit the red button on the dash. I asked, "Why am I no longer enjoying traveling on Interstate W?" Just that quick a quiet, gentle voice came on. "Remember the toll gates." That's all.

Saul: Strange, wasn't it?

Paul: Yes and no. It wasn't necessary to say more. Just that quick my mind traveled back to the toll gates where Interstate W begins. I remembered that huge arch over the road and the sign that said, "Welcome to the way of pleasure." Then as I slowed down to pay the toll, the collector just waved me on. I thought to myself, "It looks like I'm off to a good start."

Saul: That's the same thing I thought as I drove under that huge arch.

Paul: But after I had driven a ways, something began troubling me. I remembered what my parents told me. They said that along side the wide toll gate, there was a narrow gate and that if I wanted to have a good trip, I should go through it.

Saul: Exactly, my folks told me the same thing. In fact, if I'm not mistaken, you and I even discussed this before getting our driver's license. We decided we would take the right road.

Paul: Now that you mention it, I do remember that conversation. My mom always told me that I should stay tuned in to Station G. But when I got my driver's license, I got to thinking. "Why doesn't mom want me to tune in to station D? Is she trying to hide something from me?" So I began tuning in on Station D. When I heard all of their propaganda about Interstate W, I became curious.

Saul: I'm following you. And that isn't all they said. What I remember so clearly is how they kept saying that if we took Highway H, the "dinky" road to the right, we would be slaves for the rest of our lives.

Paul: Right, right. So when I came to the fork in the road, something told me I should take Highway H, but I decided I wanted to be free, so I took Interstate W.

Saul: Are you suggesting we did the wrong thing?

Paul: I'm having my doubts.

Saul: And what are you going to do about it?

Paul: I plan on tuning in on Station G for a while. Whenever necessary, I'll hit the red button and see if I can get some firsthand information. Why don't you do the same?

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Saul: I hardly know what to say. What if what we hear on Station W is the truth? What if Highway H is a no return proposition. If I were you, I'd go sort of slow.

Paul: I'll let you know if I find out anything interesting.

Paul does what he said he would do. He spends more and more time tuned in on Station G. He calls his parents on his cellular. Slowly but surely the realization that he is on the wrong road sinks in. Finally, in desperation, he hits the red button and pleads, "Are there no exits on this road?"

The answer came through clearly. "There are no exits."

Still depressing the red button, Paul becomes panicky. "So then there is no way off this road?"

The answer was a simple question. "Why do you want off?"

Taken aback by the simplicity of the question, Paul stammers, "Well, I'm wondering if maybe I'm on the wrong road."

"People who wonder stay on this road."

This answer depressed Paul. He remembered how his parents always taught him that travelers who chose Highway H were always well received. But Station G wouldn't so much as give him any hope. The telephone rings.

Paul: Hello.

Saul: Hi, buddy. I haven't heard from you for a while. How are you making out?

Paul: Rotten. I made contact with Station G and asked if there aren't any exits on this road. I was told there aren't. Then I was asked why I wanted off. I answered that I wondered if maybe I was on the wrong road. Then came the bottom line. "People who wonder stay on this road."

Saul: It makes you wonder if there is really a right or a wrong road. Maybe it's all a frame of mind. If we set our minds to being happy on Interstate W, we may still find happiness.

Paul: I don't know. About all I can say right now is that I'm disappointed and confused.

Saul: Personally, I believe that what we're looking for is right on this road. I'm going to check it out.

Paul is not a quitter. After the initial disappointment has worn off, he decides to tune in on Station G again. What he hears causes him to draw up. "Enter in at the narrow tollgate, for wide is the toll gate and broad the interstate that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because narrow is the tollgate and narrow is the highway that leads to life and few there be that find it."

Paul hits the red button again. "How do I find the narrow tollgate?" he blurts out.

"Why do you want off this road?"

"Because this is the road of destruction and if I don't get off, I am doomed . . ." His voice quavers.

"Then look for the narrow tollgate."

"The narrow tollgate?! That's way back there! There's no way I can get there. Please, are there no exits on this road?"

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“There are no exits.”

Saul: Hello

Paul: Saul, things are worse than I expected. I made contact with Station G again. Do you know what I was told? I was told to find the narrow tollgate. That’s the one we passed when we took the interstate. There are no exits on the inter. . .”

Saul: Don’t be so sure. I’ve been doing a little investigation on my own. I’ve done some calling and different ones have told me that there are exits on this interstate.

Paul: It’s hard to believe that there aren’t any. Would you believe that according to Station G, I have to find the narrow tollgate? There is no way one could turn around on this interstate and travel in the opposite direction. Saul, if you come up with any more information on those exits, let me know.

Once again Paul tunes in on Station G. Someone is telling a story. “. . . and so he travels to a far country. For a while he has a big time, but then he runs out of money and begins to go hungry. He realizes that if he stays here he will die. So what does he do? He says, ‘How dumb of me to be out here taking care of pigs and going hungry. If I could at least eat what they eat, then maybe I could survive. But I can’t. I know what I’ll do. I’ll go back home.’ So he quit his job and started back. It wasn’t easy, but he hung right in there. When he was still a ways from home, his dad was looking out of the window. He said, ‘That looks like my boy!’ And he ran out to welcome him back home.”

Paul hits the red button. “Please, I need some advice. I want to head back to the narrow tollgate, but how do I turn around in this kind of traffic? And even if I manage to turn around, how do I drive into the face of thousands of cars? Sure as anything a cop will pull me over.”

“Turn on your headlights, turn around and head into the traffic.”

“Should I try and drive on the shoulder of the road?”

“Drive wherever your headlights shine. They will tell you where to go.”

“Won’t someone hit me?”

“Keep your headlights on, stay tuned in on Station G, when things get tough, hit the red button. We will be waiting for you.”

Saul: Hello.

Paul: Saul, I’ve made up my mind. I’m going back. I know it sounds foolhardy, but I believe from the bottom of my heart it will work. Shall we drive together?”

Saul: Hold it, hold it. You know I’m the kind that likes to think things through. Furthermore, I’ve done some more checking and everything indicates there are exits from this road. So I ask, shall we drive together—you with me?”

Paul: Thanks, Saul, but I have my mind made up. If I keep my headlights on and stay tuned in to Station G, there will be a way.

Saul: Why use your headlights? No one else does on this road . . . ?

Paul: Exactly! All of these drivers are scared of headlights. Well, so long. I’ve got my headlights on and am turning around . . .

Horns honk. Drivers shake their fist at Paul. But he keeps on. Now he is broadside

to the traffic. Oncoming cars can't see his glaring headlights. A crash seems to be imminent. Paul hits the red button. "What shall I do?" he shouts in desperation.

"Trust in what I promised."

The very last moment the cars veer away. Now he is facing the oncoming traffic. He trembles as cars come straight toward him and veer away at the last split second.

It isn't easy. Strangers glare at him. An occasional acquaintance looks at him in astonishment, as if he has gone crazy. Word of the crazy driver has gotten around and his cell phone rings incessantly. After explaining for the umpteenth time, "This is the wrong road and so I'm going back," he begins to grow weary. He considers flinging his cell out of the window, but on impulse he hits the red button. A gentle voice prompts him: "Don't grow weary. Keep answering the phone. Tell them why you are coming back. They won't tune into Station G, so now you are being their radio for me. And don't forget your friend Saul."

Saul: Hello.

Paul: Do you remember what I told you about traveling with my headlights on and keeping tuned in on Station G? It works!

Saul: That's not all that works. Everyone knows about you. The news on Station D is full of it. According to what they say, it's but a matter of time until they will have eliminated you. Drivers are being instructed to crowd you off the road.

Paul: And so, who do you believe?

Saul: Well, it's sort of like this. I admire you for your courage and determination. But I can't see risking my life like you are when there is the possibility of finding other exits. Why not just ease off of the interstate instead of making a big ruckus like you are?

Paul: I tell you, there is no other exit.

Paul is not a quitter. By driving practically nonstop, he makes good time. The day comes when he once again drives under the immense arch of the tollgate. This time in the opposite direction.

He is free. Or so he thinks.

Paul drives straight to the narrow tollgate to Highway H. Remembering the story of the son who returned home, he half expects someone to come running to greet him. He honks. The only response is utter silence.

The old feeling of panic grips Paul's heart. "Have I left all my friends, have I faced every kind of danger possible, have I suffered ridicule, all for nothing?" he thinks.

Something is drastically wrong. Was Saul right after all? In despair Paul rests his head on the steering wheel. He sighs deeply. He rests his hand on the dash. Inadvertently he hits the red button.

"Having problems?"

Startled, Paul stares at the radio. "Why . . . yes," he answers. "I'd like to pay my toll and get onto Highway H. You see, I've left all and have run terrible risks to get to this place. I have told hundreds of drivers that the interstate is the way of destruction. I don't understand why no one pays any attention to me."

"It isn't that no one is paying attention to you. Our eyes are on you continually. We

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know what you have gone through and what you have left. Now stop and think. Why did you have to go through all that? Wasn't it because when you drove past this tollgate the first time, you tuned in on Station D and ignored what your parents taught you, and the advice you received earlier on Station G? You have suffered because of your disobedience. No amount of suffering or sacrifice can gain you admittance to Highway H."

Paul shakes his head in disbelief. Has he faced traffic for days and months, suffered ridicule and had his name published as a traitor, only to find out he still can't get onto Highway H?

The voice continues. "You want to drive through the tollgate, don't you? But how? Do you think that big sports car of yours will fit through this narrow gate? It doesn't take a tape measure to see that there is no possible way you can get through this tollgate."

How very true. How could he have missed something so significant, so obvious? Very, very true. He could have faced that traffic for a hundred years and heard hundreds of thousands of jeers, and his car would still have been too big to get through the narrow tollgate.

With a cry of anguish, Paul exclaims, "I am lost! What must I do to get through this narrow tollgate? My car is too big and my resources too small. Must I die here?"

"Ah, now you are beginning to see things as they are. But do you realize that you couldn't have turned around and faced the traffic on the interstate if we wouldn't have taught you how to use your headlights? Would you have made it back here without our instructions? No, if we would have treated you like Station D treats the drivers on the interstate, you would still be there, closer than ever to your destruction. Now I ask you, are you sure you want to get onto Highway H? Are you willing to pay the price, whatever it may be?"

"Am I sure I want onto Highway H? Yes, I am sure. Am I willing to pay the price, whatever it may be? I have nothing I can pay, and if I did, what good would it be? My car would still be too big to fit through the narrow tollgate."

"Come now, come now. You have nothing to offer? Absolutely nothing?"

"Absolutely nothing. My situation is hopeless . . . unless . . . unless you have some kind of plan for beggars."

It seemed Paul could sense a smile in the voice when it resumed speaking. "Ah, a plan for beggars. Indeed we have. In fact, it is exactly this plan that you need. Would you like to hear about our plan?"

"With all my heart."

"We call it the Lazarus Plan. It's for people who come here empty handed, with nothing to offer. Let's begin with your car. Your car is totally unsuitable for driving on Highway H. It won't fit through the tollgate, nor is it suitable for traveling on the road ahead. So what do we do? If you enroll in the Lazarus plan, we will take your junk heap of a sports car and convert it into a compact that will fit through the narrow tollgate. But there is another problem. By law, anyone who drives past this tollgate, as you did, and willingly and knowingly chooses the interstate is forever barred from Highway H.

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Or to put it into plain words, the driver who despises the narrow tollgate and drives under the wide arch is condemned to death. By rights you should still be speeding toward your death on the interstate.”

Paul’s head is hanging low. In a whisper he asks, “So the Lazarus plan won’t work for me?”

“Pay attention to what I say. The Lazarus plan is what you offer us. Nothing. What we offer you is the Jesus plan. You will remember that I said that you are condemned to die. So are all the other drivers on the interstate. This is a terrible thing. Terrible beyond what man can even imagine. That is why we have the Jesus plan. God, the owner of Station G, sent His Son Jesus to die for every driver that has ever driven upon this earth . . .”

“Excuse me. But would that be fair? One die for millions?”

“Totally fair. You see, it was one, the devil—the owner of Station D—who condemned all the drivers in the world to death. So now, if you come before Jesus as a beggar, permit Him to convert your car to a compact, recognize Him as your personal Savior, and promise to drive for Him the rest of your life, then you may place your car in the shop. Is that what you want?”

“That is what I want.”

The little car that Paul now drives is so small that only he fits in it. But it is all he needs or wants.

As Paul drives along in his little compact, his phone rings.

Paul: Hello.

Saul: Paul, how are things?”

Paul: Wonderful, Saul. And how are things going for you?

Saul: Wonderful, marvelous! Guess what. I have traded cars. I’m driving a little compact.

Paul: A compact?

Saul: That’s right. And now for the rest of the news. I found an exit from the interstate. We talked about the narrow tollgate and you thought the only one was way back there, the one we didn’t take. Hey! Let me tell you. I had the most wonderful experience. You won’t believe it. Here’s what happened. I tuned in on Station D. Then I hit the red button and asked if there was only one narrow tollgate. Just that quick I had my answer. I was told that just a little ways ahead there was a narrow tollgate. So I just pulled up to it, beeped my horn, and a fellow came out to talk to me. He said my car was too big and that I would have to drive a compact. I said, “No problem.” So he said I should just turn my sports car in and he would give me a brand spanking new compact. Is it ever a jewel! It may be small, but it has a motor like you wouldn’t believe. Oh, I’m so happy!”

Paul: Did the fellow you talked to tell you about any kind of plan? A Lazarus plan or a Jesus plan?

Saul: He talked a lot about the Dorcas Plan . . .

Paul: The what plan?

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Saul: The Dorcas plan. Dorcas had a lot of good works, you know. So when I got to the narrow tollgate, where I traded cars, he told me that good works are very important. You will remember that I always tried to be fair and square with people. When I told him that he looked real happy . . .

Paul: And what about the Jesus plan?

Saul: He mentioned that too. He said that basically the Dorcas plan and the Jesus plan are the same thing.

Paul is a careful driver. By staying tuned in to Station G, he learns much about the road he is traveling. It bothers him that there are so few traveling on Highway H. Because of this he is often seen talking on his cell phone, trying to convince others to turn around on the interstate like he did. Finally when he manages to get one driver to turn around and face the traffic, like he did, he is exuberant. He gets on the phone and calls his friend Saul.

Saul: Hello.

Paul: Hi, Saul. How are things going?

Saul: Wonderful! Wonderful! And up your way, how are things?

Paul: Saul, I'm really happy. I finally got someone to leave the interstate. It's a satisfying experience.

Saul (after a brief pause): You mean to tell me this is the first one you managed to help?

Paul: Yes. Don't you think it is great?

Saul (another pause): In all these months you have helped only one? I don't want to discourage you, but I help more than that a day.

Paul: Unbelievable! Tell me about it.

Saul: It's simple. There are a lot of people on the interstate who are unsure of themselves. They have heard about Highway H and would like to get onto it. So I simply tell them to take the next exit to the left . . .

Paul: Just a moment, Saul. You say you tell them to take the next exit to the left. But Highway H is to the right of the interstate. . .

Saul: I used to think that too, so I hit the red button and called headquarters. They told me that both are Highway H and that up ahead they will merge. The important thing, they told me, is to get a compact that will fit in the narrow tollgate. Paul, let me tell you. I have helped hundreds through the narrow tollgate and onto Highway H. We almost have traffic jams at times. The way I'm outfitting people with cars, you would think that I was running a car agency. And let me tell you something else that I discovered. The same as it is possible to access Highway H most anyplace, it's also possible to get back onto the interstate. . .

Paul: But wait a minute! Back onto the interstate? Never!

Saul: Why not? Wake up, man! How do you expect to help people on your little cellular? My buddies and I get back on the interstate where people need help. We're on the Dorcas plan so we try and be good Samaritans. I drive right up along side other cars, roll down my window and talk to them personally. If they show interest,

we pull off at the next rest stop and I show them how simple it is to leave the interstate.

Paul finds this conversation quite disturbing. Is Saul right after all? Should he have listened to his advice? Is he being narrow-minded and thus disqualifying himself to help others?

Desperate for an answer, Paul hits the red button and relates all that is going through his mind. The answer comes back immediately. “Paul, the Jesus plan isn’t the same as the Dorcas plan. Highway H has never run parallel to the interstate. There are no exits on the interstate and only one way to get onto Highway H—not many. It’s easy to build compact cars. In fact, it has become quite an industry. But only I can take someone’s worthless car and covert it into a compact that will fit through the narrow tollgate. Let me tell you something. If any of those compacts would come back and try to get through the narrow tollgate, the real tollgate, they wouldn’t make it. We don’t accept trade-ins. Even those compacts would have to be converted. When you see fleets of compacts and hear glowing reports about what they’re doing, just remember, there is only one valid, narrow tollgate that gets converted compacts onto Highway H. Have a good trip. ▲

This Month on the Colony

Enos Miller

As the month of August was coming to a close, so did the life of Enos Miller. After having known Enos for nearly 30 years—we met in Brazil—if someone were to ask me how I remember him, this is what I would answer:

He loved his faith. He defended the faith. Should he ever have been called to chose between his faith and his life, he unhesitatingly would have given his life and kept the faith. A deacon, he would often have opportunity to bring a message. As he would warm up to his favorite theme, the preservation of the faith, the fervor of his soul would spill over into his words. We shall miss these messages.

Enos believed that hard work is a virtue. Although he never said so, his philosophy in material matters must surely have been: Never ask others to do for you what you can do for yourself. And do for others only what they can’t do for themselves.

In the graveside service, Min. Mark Loewen mentioned that we will remember Enos as a pioneer. This is so true. At heart he was a true pioneer. Over a period of 15? years, he hewed three farms out of the rough. If he would have followed his nature, he would have moved to a new location every three or four years.

Enos grew up in Ohio and made his living building houses. When he moved to Brazil, he became a farmer. Right from the beginning he raised good crops. When he put his mind to something, it worked.

Once he called me to take care of a piglet that had its underside ripped open when

the sow stepped on it. He watched me as I sutured it up. Sometime later he told me another piglet had had a similar accident. “So I got a needle and some thread from Clara and sewed it up.” It must have been a tough job with a straight needle and no instruments. But he did it.

It was a blessing to have Enos with us and it was a blessing when he could finally come to rest. It was painful to see this erstwhile active man reduced to almost total inactivity. It must have been extremely difficult for him. He spent some of his time writing up some articles on his personal convictions, which his family has printed up in booklet form.

We enjoyed Enos Miller while he was here and hope to enjoy him again where he is now. ▲

Remembering Out Loud

by my wife

Going to Town

What an adventure! How shall we go? By truck? By jeep? By VW bus (Kombi)? Since when we first came to Brazil we went to town about every two weeks, it was always a big day. We try to remember everything we need to take along, including the 5 liter jug to be filled with cooking oil. Almost tired out by the time we get started, we go to several places and pick up others who also need to go to town. Car pooling is the order of the day.

We follow the old fisherman’s trail until we get to a precarious log bridge over the Pirapitinga Creek. So what’s wrong with a log bridge? The logs were turned the wrong way. And only four of them—two pairs—crossing the creek. Turn a bit too much to the left or turn a bit too much to the right, and you didn’t go to town that day. Many were the times that someone had to get out and direct the vehicle across.

OK, so we manage to cross the Pirapitinga Creek. Now we start zigzagging around, trying to scoot around mud holes and stopping periodically to open gates. Seven of them. Every now and then we stop, get out the shovel and the hoe, and fix road so we can continue toward our destination.

So it’s torture to go to town? By no means! It’s enjoyable, and we have approximately two hours to enjoy the approximately 25 miles we have to drive.

We have crossed the Pirapitinga Creek and drive through some woods, up a long hill and then back down until we get to the rickety old bridge over the Rio Verdinho River. Part of the bridge has a real sag to it, but it has never let us down, so we figure it’ll be good for another crossing.

Once safely across the bridge, we are in João Mota’s fazenda (farm). João is Luiz Duarte’s dad. The road goes right through their front yard. If we go early—real, real

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early, when the sun is just coming up—we'll see Dona Otávia, Luiz's mother out in the corral milking the cows (Luiz is still sacked out). Often someone from here needs a ride to town, so we make room.

Now we start up another hill and travel through more woods, going this way and that. Very seldom do we meet another vehicle on this road. Once in a while we may see a horseman, or maybe someone in a horse drawn cart. Flying up above the treetops we spot beautiful blue and yellow or red and blue macaws, almost always flying in pairs. Along streams or in corn patches we may see a bunch of monkeys having a snack.

As we drive through patches of ripening rice, we see swarms of parakeets. Greedily they cut off the heads, eat a few of the grains and let the rest drop to the ground. They repeat this procedure until they have had their fill. They can do a lot of damage in a short time to a rice field.

It isn't anything strange to see several deer grazing close to the woods. Armadillos are a common sight.

But it's not only the wildlife that makes the trip interesting. As we look out across a valley, we see trees in bloom, covered with beautiful yellow, pink, purple or white flowers. This, of course, only occurs in the spring, just before the rainy season begins in September.

Finally we leave the trail we have been following and come to a more traveled road. If we're in the rainy season, it will be a sequence of mud holes. If we're in the dry season, it will be dust and more dust. But at least if we get stranded here for some reason, another vehicle should come through in 15 or 20 minutes at the most.

Finally we get to town, either covered with dust or splattered with mud (from getting out and pushing when we got stuck). We womenfolks get off at the grocery store while the menfolks go to the bank, the repair shops, machinery dealers, or wherever.

Jug in hand, we enter the grocery store which has just opened. It's modern, at least for Rio Verde about 30 years ago. It has the staples, but almost none of the items we were used to buying in grocery stores in N America. In one corner of the store there are large bins containing sugar, flour, rice, beans, macaroni, peanuts, popcorn. Not far away is a 200 liter barrel of cooking oil. A "modern" hand pump has been installed to avoid having to dip the oil out.

Now we get to the meat counter. The meat is hanging on hooks on the far wall. We tell the butcher what we want and with a few slashes of the knife he detaches our portion of beef or pork and plunks it down on the counter. Want hamburger? He will grind it on the spot.

But we have a problem. We have no refrigeration on the Colony and almost no canning jars. So how do we keep meat for two weeks, until the next trip to town? Not as hard as you think. Together with the meat we buy several kilos of pork fat, still in a slab. When we get home we cut it up and render it. The hamburger we make into meat balls, the beef we cut into chunks. Then we fry the liquid out of this meat, put it in a 20 liter can and pour the rendered lard over it. Presto! Not only does the lard preserve the meat, but it can be heated up in a jiffy and is delicious.

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Talking about cans, these 20 liter cans (approximately 5 gallons) are an important item in our pantries. They have a tight fitting lid and we use them for storing our staples, keeping them safe from bugs and ants. Our margarine comes in these 20 liter cans. If it's too much for one family, we divide it with another family or two.

We go next door to buy kerosene to burn in our little wick lamps. Here we also buy a witch's broom or a hoe or ax head.

Since the grocery store has very little produce, we now head out to the open market and it's many booths. Here we find fruit (both fresh and not so fresh), vegetables, cheese, spices, herbs, chickens on the foot, and you name it.

A trip to town usually means a visit to the drugstore to stock up on medicines, a visit to the thread store, the bakery and the ice cream store. Our noon meal is often a baloney sandwich in a bakery or ice cream and pop at the ice cream store. Sometimes we have "vitaminas," which is a mixture of different kinds of fruit, milk, sugar and ice, and then blended until smooth. Not only is it delicious, but it is very healthful.

If perchance the trip includes a visit to the doctor or dentist, then patience is a virtue.

Seldom do we manage to leave town before dark. The Brazilians are a very friendly people and before we know it we have friends everywhere we go. And in Brazil when you have friends, you talk and drink coffee together. That, of course, takes time.

Our last stop is the filling station, where we not only fuel up the vehicle, but also an assortment of jugs and cans which we will be needing until the next trip to town.

By now we're so tired that we're ready to sack out among the baggage. But if we manage to stay awake for the return trip, it may just be worth it. "Oh! Look at that big anaconda dead on the road. Someone must have run over it." "Did you see that? I'm sure it was a cougar."

Now we get to the gate, but who is brave enough to get out and open it with two bristly porcupines coming this way? Farther on we see two bright eyes shining in the dark. What is it? As we get closer, the eyes suddenly begin to go up, up . . . We giggle in embarrassment when we realize that a night hawk about scared the willies out of us. It takes only a couple of trips to sort out the night hawks from the more really dangerous animals. With a bit of luck we may even see a big tapir cross the road.

It begins to lightning and the wind sways the treetops. In just a few moments the first drops will hit us. If we have come in the jeep, we must pull down the curtains on the canvas top. If we are in the truck, a canvas must be spread over the bed.

But imagine having to be under that canvas with jugs of fuel and everything else that has been bought.

How it pours. What's more, it has rained every afternoon for a week and the river is up. We get to the rickety bridge on the Rio Verdinho and find it is under water. Now what?

We stop, ponder, pray, wait. When the rain finally lets up, some courageous person takes off his shoes, rolls up his pant legs and wades onto the bridge to see how deep the water is. A hurried conference is held and it is decided it is safe to cross. Slowly,

on wings of prayer and holding our breath, we make it across. Now we begin the long ascent out of the river bottom. In the woods we find the wind has blown a tree down, right over the road. Luckily it is a small one and we manage to pull it around enough so that we can ease past.

As we enter one of the mud holes, the water comes in at the doors of the jeep. How will the log bridge be? We can still see the tops of the logs, so we decide to give it a try. We must hit it with a certain speed or we won't make it up the hill on the other side. Someone gets out with a flashlight and directs the driver across. We know we have only one chance. But we make it.

Now we're on the home stretch. We're glad to see a dim light in our window, even if it is only the flickering glow of a kerosene light. ▲

Paraguay

by Edwin Schmidt, chapter VI

Voluntary Service in Paraguay

Then he also went through his pockets, but didn't find anything, although he did have some money on him which the bandit didn't find. In all we knew there were at least four men in the group. We were thankful that nothing more serious happened and for God's protection, for which we often prayed.

One day some of us were out at the kitchen getting the noon meal ready when suddenly there was shooting close by and the bullets were whizzing close by. This time they were not overhead. The young men who had served in the German army instantly dived flat to their stomachs behind anything that gave some protection. It was an instantaneous reaction to the training they'd had. As for me, I ran to get into the protection of the brick walls. Shortly before this one day when there was no shooting, one of the young men said he'd like to go look at the machine gun that was set up not far from where we stayed. When he got there he spoke in German and said, "I'm acquainted with this one. I've sat behind one of these. But what I don't understand is that as steadily as they seem to be firing all night that they don't burn them up." As I mentioned before, these people, especially the younger ones, had lost the non-resistance doctrine, as well as other teachings of the Mennonite faith, which we feel are Biblical.

The last several days of the war there were some rifle bullets that came through the asbestos roofs, but by that time their force was spent and they just dropped to the floor or on a cot. Again we felt our prayers answered that none of the explosive shells came through the roof. After the fighting stopped and we were walking around outside, we could see where some had exploded not far from our building. The last few days sometimes the shooting was close and at other times farther away. At times the shooting was intense and other times less or stopped altogether. But at nights it was

usually heavy. Sometimes when it let up we'd go visit with the soldiers. It seemed that here in this defense ring is where the advance of the rebels was stopped. At night there would be some infiltration of the rebels through the government troop's line. In the day they would round up the rebels. Because of this, I suppose, to us it seemed that at times the fighting was in one direction and other times in another direction.

At the end there was heavy gunfire for two days and nights. On the last day around mid-afternoon a sudden quiet fell over the countryside. All the shooting ceased. At first it was almost hard to grasp that it had all ended. We had been concerned about close combat developing where in the heat of battle a group of soldiers might come charging into our quarters. We were not so concerned about the government soldiers because we had gotten somewhat acquainted with them. But we didn't know about the rebel soldiers. Again, it all turned out well. After a while when it remained quiet we ventured outside. The government soldiers were jubilant. They said, "Our plan worked. The rebel forces ran out of supplies and have taken to the bush. The war is over."

We wondered what had happened to the refugees at San Lorenzo. We went to the highway to see about getting there, but we soon saw fox holes manned by soldiers having their guns pointing to the road. We decided it was best not to proceed. It took another two or three days before the road was open. Those at the San Lorenzo center had been just as concerned about us as we had been for them. When the rebels had come through San Lorenzo, some soldiers had grabbed several women, but the refugee men had promptly made it known that such was out of the question. So nothing serious happened at either place.

Ten days or so after the ending of the war, we were able to start moving the refugees to the colonies again, some going to the new Volendam colony and some to the Chaco. Some 400 had gotten through to the Chaco before the way there was closed. After a week of moving out we were able to close the La Fabrica center, leaving just a few families to watch the baggage until it could all be moved. I was at the La Fabrica center a little over three months. Then I went to help at the San Lorenzo center. Here at San Lorenzo my work included buying food supplies, keeping an eye on the food storeroom and kitchen. It didn't work to tell the cooks, "Here are the supplies, get what you need." The proper amounts needed to be dealt out. On the days people left for the colonies it meant a lot of work helping to get everything ready. It could mean 15–18 hour days, from rising time to bedtime. A little over a month was spent at San Lorenzo. By this time most of the people had left for the colonies.

Oct. 6, 1947—My next assignment was to go to the Chaco. I traveled together with two other MCC workers. We traveled up the Paraguay River on a rather small combination passenger and freight boat. It had some passenger cabins. It was heavily loaded and no cabin was available. It was a slow moving boat powered by steam. The captain was very easy going. When he needed a new supply of firewood he was never in a hurry about getting it loaded. When he needed meat, he'd stop at a ranch along the river, buy a beef, have it butchered, and have fresh meat. There was plenty of time.

For the night, not having a bed, we'd go on the top which was both a shade roof and

kind of a deck. In the day time it was too hot up there, so we went back down to get into the shade. Wherever we went we had to take our suitcases with us and practically sit on them to keep them from disappearing. This was one time I was glad not to be traveling by myself. It was a four day trip to get to Puerto Casado where we got off to travel overland the rest of the way. Unable to get a room in the hotel for the night, we got permission from the night watchman at Casado's tanin factory to stay there for the night. Casado was an Argentine man who owned much land in the Chaco. It was his narrow gauge railroad and short train we traveled on the next lap of our trip. The next morning we made arrangements to travel on his autovia to the end of this railroad.

The next day we waited for a ride on a Fernheim colony freight and supply truck. It didn't arrive until the next day. The following day after riding in the back on top of the loaded truck, we arrived at the Menno Colony. The belt for the generator and water pump gave out, so we stayed on the road at the edge of the colony. We spread out a canvas to sleep on that night. The next morning a man with a wagon and team of horses was hired to take us to the Fernheim Colony.

After traveling that way most of the day we arrived at Filadelfia, the headquarters of the colony. The MCC had a house in this village where the MCC workers lived. Usually we were three MCC workers living in this house. We again had a neighboring family who cooked and washed for us. It had taken us nine days to get here—a long time.

Here in the Chaco the open grassland, which was sandy, was the farmland. The bush land was the pasture land for the livestock. Some of the bush could be cleared for farming. It was rather dry and also somewhat windy, so it reminded me of western Kansas. The MCC had sent the Fernheim Colony an old telephone system, aiming to get one telephone into each village on the colony. ▲

To be continued

This & That

The Dean Penner family from Macon, MS was out to visit their former mission post in Mirassol, São Paulo, and the Colony.

The addition to the Monte Alegre School—two classrooms and a large open play area—is coming along very well. More on this next month.

Daniel & Anna Kramer and dau. Fyanna are spending some time on the colony in Mato Grosso. Daniel is doing some building for his children who are living there.

August 5 was Rio Verde's 150th anniversary. A group of men got together to lay up the walls of a new house for our sister Zelinda Sperb and her husband Bruno. A day well spent.

On the 6th and 7th we had some rain. One of our neighbors lost 12 head of cattle in an electrical storm.

From the 10th to the 15th the Girl's Preparatory Class was held at the Monte Alegre Congregation, with Min. Elias Stoltzfus and his wife Colleen as the instructors. Those

who took the course were: Barbie Dirks, Francine Koehn, Luciene Rosa, Jessica Dirks, Wendy Penner, Wanda Schultz, Arlete Arantes, Leila Ambrósio, Agardênia Arantes, Eliana Silva, Flávia Passos, Juliana Araújo, Lucélia Duarte, Fyanna Kramer, Teresa Hibner, Brenda Hibner, Marion Unruh, Rosa Dirks, Marcia Loewen, Eliamar Silva.

Cleusa, Mrs. Galen Coblentz, from Ohio, and her daughter Stephanie, spent several weeks here visiting relatives.

Chicken pox are making one of their periodic rounds.

On August 27 Carlos & Nita Becker had a little girl, Joylene Yolanda. Guess who the grandparents are.

Both the Rio Verdinho and Monte Alegre schools began their new school year on the 31st. The teachers at the Rio Verdinho School are: Luciene Rosa, Rosa Dirks and Elizabeth Schmidt, who just arrived from the US. At the Monte Alegre School the teachers are: Maxine Loewen, Veleda Loewen, Wendy Penner, Laura Costa, Cláudia Neves, Arlete Arantes, with Teresa Hibner as an aide.

Between the 26th and the 30th, Ministers Elias Stoltzfus and Dean Mininger held meetings at the Pirenópolis Congregation. Ministers Leon Koehn and Mark Loewen were there on the 30th, when Communion was observed.

Enos Miller's funeral at the Rio Verdinho Congregation was on September 1. An interesting sidelight is that the Enos Miller, Dan Coblentz and Daniel Kramer families moved to Brazil together toward the end of 69. Dan & Clara Coblentz, now living in the US, came to Brazil for a visit. They had arranged for Divino Cândido, a brother living in Goiânia to meet them there and take them to the bus station so they could catch a bus to Rio Verde. In the meantime Enos passed away. So when Divino met them at the airport, he took them direct to the Colony instead of to the bus station. They arrived at the funeral just a bit late. Daniel & Anna Kramer, on the other hand, were in Mato Grosso and weren't able to attend the funeral. Also Brian Yoder, a grandson was in Mato Grosso and couldn't be present.