

Brazil News



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Editorial

Stop, Caution, Go

Traffic lights are a common scene in most cities of the world. Designed to control the flow of vehicles, we can hardly imagine the chaos that would result should they all suddenly be removed.

And yet traffic lights are totally powerless. All they can do is gaze down and make suggestions by intermittently changing color. The practical results of these protracted winks are directly proportional to the self-discipline of the passing motorists.

An American who has never been exposed to foreign traffic may have a bit of difficulty understanding what is being said, so a few explanations are in order. We hasten to say that we are not so naïve as to believe that all Americans are law-abiding motorists. There are violators, but they are the exception to the rule. In many foreign countries, law-abiding drivers are the rare exception to the rule.

Here are a few of the driving habits I find impressive in N America:

Uniformity of speed on highways. Most vehicles travel at approximately the same speed on any given highway, in contrast to foreign traffic where speeds range from 50 percent below speed limit to 100 percent above. The only effective way to control speed in hazardous areas is with sleeping policemen (transversal bumps) that can literally wreck a car if crossed at excessive speeds.

Courtesy. It's amazing how a steering wheel can reduce normally courteous people to the status of brutes. In many countries, to cross a street on foot requires the adroitness of an acrobat and the agility of a panther. Here in the US, when I furtively peek out from behind a parked vehicle to see if there will be a gap in traffic to allow me to sprint across the street, I find it quite humiliating when cars gently come to a halt and the motorists graciously smile me over to the other side.

Four-way stops. In Brazil four-way stops would be four-way crashes, and then four-way brawls. The concept of each vehicle awaiting its turn to cross is foreign—literally.

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This list could go on, but we have made our point. And the lesson is this: It requires self-discipline to have orderly traffic. You good folks from N America are to be commended for your road manners. But wait.

Life is often compared to a pathway or highway. It too has traffic lights that need to be observed, and there needs to be self-discipline, which is what this article is all about.

Self-discipline, in life, is knowing when to use the brake, the clutch (or gear selector) and the accelerator. Being a good driver on freeways is by no means a guarantee of being a good driver on life's highway. In fact, we might be in for a real shocker if a list of traffic violators on the highway of life were published in our daily papers. A lot of subscriptions would be canceled. There might even be a few red-faced Holdemens around.

Stop. A red light means "stop," not "stop to negotiate" nor "stop if necessary or convenient." We see something advertised in the paper at an incredibly low price. It's an item we have wanted for a long time. But, even at a greatly reduced price, we can't afford it (and probably don't need it). The red light flashes on. Stop. We hit the brakes—lightly—but don't come to a complete stop. Slowly we enter the intersection. We glance in both directions. No one coming. At least not close enough to hit us. We may be driving slowly, but our thoughts are racing at 100 m.p.h.:

"This is a chance in a lifetime. It's the exact model and color I've always wanted. Half price. True, I'm in a real financial bind right now, but can I afford to pass this deal up? If I can manage to come up with some overtime on the job (if the price of wheat goes up, etc.), I think I can swing it . . ."

By now we're well into the intersection on a red light. We are apprised of our imprudence by angry looks and a symphony of honking horns. We hit the gas. After all, we don't want to have a wreck. That was a close one. The fact that we didn't get hit almost makes it look like an open door to go ahead and do that which is tempting us.

What has happened? We have turned the red light into a caution light. We console ourselves that we will take a look. We'll be careful. But caution is no great virtue after running a red light. Contrary to the present generation which sees red as yellow, our forefathers many times saw green as yellow. That was self-discipline at its finest.

Caution. Here's what the American Heritage Dictionary says about caution: "Careful forethought to avoid danger or harm. b. Close attention or vigilance to minimize risk: The car proceeded over the rickety bridge with caution. 2. Prudence or restraint in action or decision: advised caution in choosing a school. 3. A warning or admonishment, especially to take heed: I received a caution from the doctor about fat in my diet. 4. A cautious action; a precaution: The climbers took the necessary cautions in preparing for the ascent.

That's a challenging definition, but too many times our definition is: "A brief period of perfunctory meditation before embarking on a predetermined venture or course. 2. An effort to avoid a potentially dangerous situation through fast action: Approaching the intersection and seeing the light had turned to caution, the motorist hit the accelerator (instead of the break) to avoid being hit by the onrushing traffic."

It requires real self-discipline to be cautious, to stop and carefully analyze a situation with an open mind. It's the people who have this ability that make the wheels of humanity, and of the church, go round.

Go. Strangely, people who run red lights and accelerate on caution, frequently stop when the light turns green. It often takes just as much or more self-discipline to go when the light turns green, as it does to stop when it turns red. In community and church projects, it isn't unusual for someone who has difficulty finding the brake on personal projects, to religiously shove the brake pedal down to the floorboards, especially when funding is involved. Self-discipline?

Self-discipline is definitely more than being law abiding when the light turns to caution or stop. Both the nation and the church desperately need men and women who have the courage and strength to step on the accelerator when the light turns green. These are the folks who are willing to give freely of their time, talent and money for the welfare of the kingdom. Indeed, it is exactly these people who often must stop on caution and watch others zip by, in order to be able to accelerate on go.

In Brazil farmers often spread lime at night because of the daytime wind. A very successful farmer once told me: "I used to detest spreading lime at night, but I knew it had to be done. So I decided I just as well make the best of it and today I enjoy spreading lime at night." Self-discipline.

Let's face facts. Self-discipline is going out of style. The loss of this basic value is costing us dearly. Even as we smugly pat ourselves on the back for being a civilized people, in self-discipline we are regressing into the third-world.

In countries where people drive without self-discipline, fatality rates are high. The same is true in societies where self-discipline isn't practiced. Can we, the people of God, afford this? ▲

Updating the Past

Stranded in the Desert Without Water

By Lloyd Koehn

Moundridge, KS

(Continuation of The Long Road to California)

It was time to retire for the night, so, as our custom was, we parked beside the highway. We were a short distance from the lake. As we looked around, we saw what appeared to be fire falling far to the north of us. We surmised that it was slag from an ore smelter. What it looked like was that slag was loaded on cars coming out of the smelter on a track. A drop-off was at the end of the track. Here the stuff was dumped overboard. It was quite a spectacle as car after car dropped its contents, causing the glowing fire fall.

Some of our group had bought a box of crackers for our supper. As I recall, this was

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the only food we had that evening. We rolled up in our blankets, hoping to spend a peaceful night. As it was, mosquitoes kept bussing around us all night. I rolled up in my blanket (actually a quilt), trying to cover myself from head to foot. Unknowingly, the bottom of one of my feet had been exposed. When I awoke the next morning, I had a mosquito bite in the middle of the sole of one of my feet.

The next morning, after picking up our paraphernalia, found us driving west on Highway 50. We soon noticed ahead of us in the distance, a white landscape, resembling snow. When we got to the area, we discovered that it was salt. A vast desert of salt surrounded us. We were in the Great Salt Desert, also known as the Salt Flats.

We had some crackers left from the night before, so as we were driving through the Salt Flats we ate the rest of the crackers. I suppose that was all the breakfast we had that morning. We soon realized that we were getting thirsty. When I think back, I am amazed at our lack of foresight. We apparently did not have enough room in the car to store an adequate supply of drinking water. In the back of my mind I visualize a small canteen, that held perhaps a half gallon, but I don't remember that we had any other containers for drinking water. There was always plenty of water available from springs east of the Continental Divide. Springs and rivers were few and far between west of the Divide. So on this particular morning, as we were driving through the Salt Desert, we were facing a predicament; we were thirsty, but had no water.

The ditches beside the road were lined with pure salt, and they were filled with water! At one point we stopped the car and everyone got out. We gazed at the flat, white terrain around us, and at the sparkling clear water in the ditches. We were tempted to drink the ditch water, but we knew it was too salty to drink. Ben, however, got a cup out of the car and filled it with ditch water. Somebody said, "Ben, don't drink it! It's saltwater." Ben retorted, "I've drunk saltwater before." He swallowed a small amount of the water and it appeared like he would pass out. It was some time till he was back to normal. Ben remarked later that the water had been strong as strychnine.

After this unpleasant episode we were on our way again, heading west. We finally arrived at the small hamlet of Wendover, Nevada, situated just west of the Utah state line. Here we had to make a decision. We had been driving across the Salt Flats on Highways 50 and 40. Now, at Wendover the highway divided. Highway 40 continued in a westerly direction and Highway 50 angled off to the southwest. A large signboard beside the road stated, Follow Highway 40: Air Mail Route and River. We checked the road map. Both highways joined at Reno. Reno is a short distance east of the California state line. It appeared to us that Highway 50 was the shortest route to Reno. So we decided to take 50. We were on our way heading in a southwesterly direction toward Ely, approximately 120 miles from Wendover.

I don't know how long it took to drive to Ely. It was somewhere on this stretch of road that we noticed that the Model T was losing power. Anyway, when we got to Ely it was decided that the motor needed an overhaul. I don't remember all the details of this overhaul. We pulled over to the side of the road and parked the car. Then the unpleasant task began. The head on top of the motor and oil pan on the bottom of the

motor were removed. Then we discovered that the piston rings were shot—completely worn out.

As luck would have it, we were within walking distance of Ely. A garage or service station was contacted and a set of piston rings was purchased. We did not buy new rings, as I suppose our meager supply of money was dwindling away. We bought a set of used rings for fifty cents. The rings were installed on the pistons and I suppose the valves were ground. The head and pan were put back on the motor and we were ready to resume our journey to California.

I don't remember how long it took to overhaul the motor. I believe that it took at least a full day. It was late in the day when we left the "repair site" and drove into Ely. It was then that we faced another disappointment. The Ford did not have enough power to climb a low hill on the west edge of Ely. The rings that we installed had been taken out of another Model T motor. Now the problem was that the rings did not fit the cylinder walls on our Model T. The rings did not seal the compression nor the oil, so we had no power.

There was no other alternative but to drive around town to wear in the rings. It was dark as we were driving down one street and up another, with thick smoke pouring from the exhaust. Finally, after driving around and around on the city streets, the piston rings fit the cylinder walls, at least enough to give the Ford sufficient power to take us out of Ely. We drove a short distance in the dark, and then, as often before on this journey, we pulled over to the side of the road and rolled up in our blankets and went to sleep.

We left our "lodging place" the next morning after our unpleasant experience in Ely the day before and again headed west on Highway 50. It was either on this stretch of road or when we left Wendover, that a large sign proclaimed, 150 Miles of Desert Ahead. Fill Up With Oil, Gas and Water. We were totally unprepared for the situation we encountered that day. I suppose we were all quite relaxed as we rolled along Highway 50. The motor had more power after the working over we gave it the day before. As I recall, it was about mid-morning and we were rolling along on Highway 50 through semi-desert terrain between Ely and Eureka, Nevada. Suddenly we were startled by a clattering, rattling, banging noise in the motor. Of course, we pulled over to the side of the road and stopped. I guess we all wondered, "What now?" The noise apparently came from inside the flywheel housing on the motor.

It was decided that the only way to find the problem was to open the flywheel housing. To accomplish this, we would need to pull the motor. So with one purpose in mind, and that purpose was to get the Model T back on the road, the work began and in due time we had the motor on the ground beside the car. When we removed the cover from the flywheel house, we saw what had happened.

I'll explain, as best I remember, what the flywheel on the model T consisted of. A series of V magnets was riveted to one side of the flywheel. These magnets, whirling around the flywheel, produced the electricity for the ignition system. The motor was started by turning the motor with a crank. This crank was located in front of the motor

and below the radiator. The ignition system on the Model T Ford was adequate in its day. It was no doubt the best that engineers were able to develop at that time. It did cause some frustrations. For example, when the ignition system was not in tip-top shape, the crank had to be rotated rapidly so that the mag would generate enough spark to start the motor. Another problem was the lighting system. The electricity for the head and tail lights was also generated by the magnets. The lights shone bright when driving at a reasonable speed. But when slowing down, for instance when turning a corner, the lights would become so dim that it was almost impossible to see anything. This was the case with the earlier models. An option was offered on the later models, which came equipped with a self-starter. This, of course, required a storage battery and generator. This in turn produced continuous bright headlights. The Model T we were traveling in was equipped with a battery and generator. However, the later models still had the magnets on the flywheel.

Back to our predicament on the desert west of Ely, Nevada. When we removed the flywheel housing cover, we discovered that a number of magnets had separated from the flywheel. On closer inspection we found the reason for the separation. The wrist pin that joined the connection rod to the piston was secured with a bolt. It was evident that during the repair job the day before, someone had failed to secure the nut on one of the wrist pin bolts with a cotter key. Consequently, with the motor running, the nut slowly unscrewed from the bolt, causing the bolt to drop into the oil pan. The bolt then moved into the flywheel housing. Here it came in contact with the magnets, breaking off a number of them.

As I stated before, the battery supplied the current for the ignition, so the magnets were not needed. All the magnets on the flywheel were removed. Since some were already broken off, to leave the remaining magnets would have caused the flywheel to run off balance.

While all this work was going on, we consumed the last of our drinking water. Then we were in real trouble. Our thirst became so serious that we sipped some dirty, oily radiator water. It's a wonder it didn't kill us. A number of cars passed by, but nobody stopped. We saw a range of mountains far to the west of us. Cousin Gus and I started walking toward the distant mountains, hoping we'd find water there. After walking for quite a distance, it appeared that we were no closer to the mountains than when we left the car, so we decided to turn around and head back to the car. We had not walked very far when a car came along and picked us up. The people had drinking water, which they shared with us. It was a life-saver. It's a wonder that Gus and I didn't dehydrate while walking in the hot, dry desert. When the people we were riding with let us off at our car, the men were almost finished installing the motor.

If I remember correctly, the men working with the motor did not have a drink of water while Gus and I were gone. Since I was very tired when we got back from our walk, I found a place to lie down and soon was fast asleep. Then something woke me. I heard a lady saying, "Do you boys need water?" Three ladies in a car had stopped and were offering us WATER! They had a can in their car containing a gallon or two

of precious water. They said they had obtained water at a spring in the mountains. We quenched our thirst, replenished our own small container and poured some in the radiator. I hope we thanked the ladies over and over again for sharing their water with us. Incidentally, the ladies lived in Hillsboro, Kansas and were on their way home.

I suppose we were quite happy due to the fact that we were on the move again. It was dark when we drove into the mountains that Gus and I had tried to reach by walking. Suddenly the headlights illuminated a sign by the side of the road, which proclaimed: DRINKING WATER. An arrow pointed down. Everyone piled out of the car and ran down the rocky path. At the end of the path was a short pipe that extended out from under a cliff. Cool, clear water was flowing out of the pipe. Someone in the past had located the spring, and out of the goodness of his heart, had put in a pipe and marked the spot so that weary travelers could quench their thirst. We too, enjoyed gulping down the cool water that long-ago night. Somewhere down the road we pulled to the side, parked the Model T, rolled up in our blankets and went to sleep under the vast, starry Nevada sky.

We were still traveling in Nevada, when one day we came upon a road construction crew. We were thirsty again. The men had canvas water bags hanging on their machinery. The men shared their water with us poor, thirsty boys. While we were soothing our parched throats with the cool water, an old man with a long white beard walked up to us. He was friendly and talkative. He asked us how we liked the country. I guess we told him we didn't like the hot, dry desert. He said he liked it there. If I recall rightly, he had been living there for around 20 years. I suppose he was a prospector, possibly digging for gold or silver in the hills. He lived in a small shack beside the road.

One evening about dark, while still traveling in Nevada, we came upon a small oasis. Here, beside the highway was a filling station and store. A small pond was a short distance from the store. The air was cool and we spent a comfortable night—on the ground. ▲

To be continued

Remembering Out Loud

The Name Says It All

Already in Bible times, a name could help identify an individual: Simon the leper, Simon a tanner, Simon the Canaanite, Matthew the Publican, John the Baptist, to mention just a few.

While visiting my uncle and aunt here in Kansas, the conversation drifted to the subject of names. Memories began to come back of the curious nomenclature that evolved in the Dutch dialect to identify the many Johns, Bens, Daves, Petes, Jakes, and others, who often shared both the same first and last name. Beyond the normal descriptive names, a possibly unique feature was the usage of the wife's name before the

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husband's. Thus: Katreena Jake (Unruh) Susie Jake (Unruh), Lena Jake (Unruh), and Minnie Jake.

On the Bens we have Carrie Ben (Koehn) and Ida Ben (Koehn).

The Daves. Tilda Dave (Koehn) and Nettie Dave (Becker)—my grandpa.

The Petes. Eva Pete (Unruh), Carolina Pete (Unruh) and Dina Pete (Unruh).

Some of the descriptive names were self-explanatory: Blind John, Deaf John, Big John, Little John, Little Pete, Fat Jacob.

As is common in many languages, there were the names derived from the person's profession. There was a Thresher John and a Thresher Pete, in a referral to the days when grain was cut with binders, shocked and then hauled to the threshing machine, run by a steam engine, to separate the grain from the straw. To be in charge of either the steam engine or the threshing machine, brought a certain amount of prestige to the person.

There was School Teacher Pete Johnson.

One of the most interesting is "Culla" Dave Koehn. In addition to his normal activities as a farmer, Dave exercised the now defunct art of the "chicken culler." While some called him Culler Dave, the majority used the Dutch version of Culla (which, who knows, may have been borrowed from the English).

To raise a few head of cattle, a few hogs and some chickens used to be just as Mennonite as the John Deere tractor is today. The chickens obviously weren't cage layers. During the winter they would be penned up in a chicken house and during the summer they would often run loose. This made it impossible to know which ones were productive. Hence the chicken culler. By palpating the bird, a good culler could, with reasonable accuracy, determine whether it would be more productive in the nest or in the frying pan.

I still have pleasant recollections of Culla Duft (as he was known in Dutch) coming to our place to practice his art.

Some names reflected a physical characteristic. Slim Jake was, of course, a slender person, and Fat Jacob was heavy. Straight Back Tobe had extremely good posture. Black Simon had a darker than average complexion. Curly John very likely had curly hair. Honest Pete surely was honest.

Some of the names apparently referred to the place where the person was born or resided for some time. We have Dakota Ben (Koehn), Alabama Joe and California Red. This last one gives us a double dose. Did this man from California have red hair?

There were names that came about because of some unusual habit or happening. After coming over from Russia, Pigeon William (Koehn) built a pigeon house and raised pigeons for commercial purposes.

The name Costa Fritz evokes a chuckle from people who knew him. Costa is the dutchification (not in the dictionary) of "coaster," so we're really talking about Coaster Fritz. Old-timers tell of how he would come roaring over the crown of a hill in his roadster and gather speed as he sped down. Suddenly there would be silence and Costa would be coasting. Every chance he had, he would repeat this procedure.

Then there was Shida John. Shida means “divorced.” I’m not sure if he was divorced or if it was the woman he married.

Creek Tobias Unruh is to have lived along some creek.

I didn’t have the time to check out the history of all the names. Among these we have Civa Abe, Birdie Abe and Dubra John. All I know about Dubra is that he came over from Russia.

We have tried to avoid printing the names of people who are yet living. Nevertheless, in case we have goofed and you find your name in this article, take cheer, you’re not dead.

We’d appreciate some input from you readers. Do you know of any interesting names and their history? Let us know if you do.

I would like to thank my great-aunt Mornie Unruh, age 97, who supplied me with many of these names.

Zigzagging Around

Two Children

One of the reasons we were anxious to come to the States was to see several children who had lived with us until placed in permanent homes.

One day when I was in Rio Verde, one of the social workers told me they had a little five year old boy who was needing a home. Would I like to see him?

When we got to where he lived with his grandmother, it took only one glance to realize he was a little fellow that would make someone a fabulous son. He wanted to ride in my car, so the social worker said I should take him out for a ride. In half a wink he was on my lap, calling the shots. His idea was that corners are made to turn on, so before too long he had me thoroughly lost.

I said, “Wanderlei, now how do we get back?” With the confidence of an old pro who has been driving for 50 years, he gave me instructions—still turning at every corner. I soon caught on that the last thing he wanted was to get back home and end his joyride. Finally, pretty much by chance, we found our way back.

For Wanderlei there was no such thing as a stranger. He would walk up to anyone, anyplace, and start talking like they had known each other for years. Since he apparently had spent a lot of his time around grownups, he had an adult vocabulary, which added to his honest little charm.

When things worked out for us to take him home, he immediately became Sylvia’s project. She spent hours just talking and playing with him. In the evenings the entire family would enjoy him.

I think that one thing that made him so endearing was his honesty. When he did something naughty and we asked him about it, his normally cheerful little face would eclipse into the most woebegone expression and he would shake his head yes, even if

he knew it would involve a punishment. We can't help but believe that his grandmother did a good job of training him.

We told Bradley & Jolene Koehn from Meade, Kansas and they immediately agreed they wanted to try for adoption.

Getting Wanderlei's adoption papers through was an agonizing affair that drug out for over a year. With every setback, there was an air of frustration in our home. Even though we didn't tell him what the problem was, his perceptive little mind understood what was happening. While he was with us, we took other children in. When they would for one reason or another return to town, he began putting two and two together and understood that this might be his fate too. Even though he hid it quite well, this worked on him a lot more than we suspected at the time.

Finally Wanderlei's adoption came through and he was now Bruce Dean Koehn. Bradley and Jolene took him to his new home and new life.

Now, a year and a half later, we were anxious to see the little boy whom we had learned to know as Wanderlei. I think the best part was hearing him talk about "my dad." It was with obvious pride that he showed me their farmyard, which included everything from the baby kittens to the big John Deere tractor. Finally I said, "You've got a mighty fine place here, don't you." Modestly he replied, "Not really. It could use some mowing." Seeing he had possibly gone overboard in his modesty, he added, "Really, it is quite nice."

As mentioned, the insecurity Bruce faced during the time of adoption was probably greater than we suspected. In an effort to block out the past, with all its uncertainties, he purged the Portuguese language from his mind. Each time I would try and begin a conversation in Portuguese, he would become extremely uncomfortable and almost beg, "Please don't talk like that to me." It appears he can't even understand it anymore. Jolene says he even resists eating rice and beans, which in Brazil was his staple food.

A fine little fellow, he and his new parents deserve each other.

Some eight years ago when we found out Don & Debbie Simpson from California wanted to adopt a child, we began checking with different ones in Rio Verde who might know of someone needing a home. One of them, Sandra Gaúcha, a social worker whose area included neighboring towns, knew of a mother who was to have a baby in Acreúna (a town on the way to Goiânia).

But when she had her baby, the mother gave it to someone else, almost as poor as she. When Sandra found out what had happened, she hit the ceiling. Storming out there, she got the thing straightened out in short order and told us to go pick up the baby.

Robyn can be eternally grateful not only to Sandra, but also to Emma Burns, my mother-in-law; to John & Dorothy Burns, and to my wife, for the fact that she didn't stay right where she was. Sandra directed us to the poor section of town and had us stop in front of a "house" made of saplings and covered with black plastic tarp.

The house wasn't the problem. In fact, the lady had everything spic-and-span. The problem was Robyn. What an unearthly ugly baby. I was ready to say até logo and head

back to Rio Verde, but Mom, John's and Faith were all exclaiming what a pretty baby it was. So, fortunately for Robyn, we loaded her up and took her home. She became Sylvia's charge.

We called Don & Debbie and they got their home study completed, clearance with INS, passports, etc. Approximately three months later Don & Debbie showed up. In one month the adoption papers were through and she was on her way to the US.

When Robyn was several years old, Debbie passed away. While it was a serious blow to this little family, it didn't upset their routine as much as one might think. Even while in Brazil, Don showed himself very capable of taking care of his little daughter.

It was gratifying now to see the strong bond that exists between Don & Robyn. She is a jewel of a little girl, always happy and smiling. And no, she is no longer the homeliest creature in the world.

It didn't work out on this trip to go to Michigan and see Melissa, the little girl Ken & Dindy Wesenberg adopted in Brazil. Maybe next time. ▲

The Mysterious Radio

We as a family have a little unwritten rule that we never turn on the TV in a motel or the radio in a rented car. So after doing some shopping in Murray, Kentucky, as we drove away, we were surprised to hear the car radio begin to softly play music.

I asked the children if they had been messing with the radio. Both gave appropriately indignant negative answers. So I began punching buttons on the dash to see if I could get the thing turned off. About the time it looked like I was making headway, the music would grow louder than ever. More punching of buttons.

After going through this cycle several times, we became suspicious. Someone lowered the window and solved the mystery. The car ahead of us had its stereo blaring away and the variation in decibels was directly proportional to the distance between that car and ours. ▲

The Hatchery

All roads lead to Rome.

As you read about the hatchery, remember that we have been out of the US for nearly 27 years. That means that most of those who were 50 years or older when we left are no longer with us. It also means that those who are 27 and younger were born after we left. Everyone else has undergone a facelift, or shall we say, facedrop, at the hands of Dr. Time.

So when we go to the congregation we grew up in, we see a lot of strange faces. And when we go to an unfamiliar congregation, we recognize almost no one.

As we meet people, we try to establish some sort of link. Amazingly, when there is a link—which is frequently—it is often found in Kansas, and more specifically, at Lone Tree.

It would be interesting if a survey could be done of all the congregations in the US to find out how many people have their roots in Kansas. I believe it would soon become evident that in terms of the US Holdemans, Kansas is the great hatchery. Thus we can figuratively say:

All roads lead from Kansas



California

We enjoyed our stay in California, which was mainly in the Livingston area. I found that the folks living there, vocationally don't fit into the traditional Holdeman mold. Their little 40 acre farms with almond orchards and vineyards are a stark contrast to the immense fields of waving grain in Kansas.

One of my first impressions was their houses, which once again don't fit into the Holdeman mold. If I were to bring a foreign visitor to Kansas, I could randomly pick a house, show it to him and pretty safely be able to say, "Pedro, this is what the homes are like in Central Kansas." That wouldn't work in California.

The difference in the homes is representative of the diverse cultural influence in California. On the block on which our son-in-law Fred Dirks lives, not a single family would fit into the traditional Moundridge mold. They are all of fairly recent foreign origin (Even Fred's wife and children are foreign).

Is this foreign influence good or bad? We all admit that America is the land of foreigners. The question among our people in California seems to be: Has a good thing been overdone? I don't have the answer. All I know is that we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves in California and have beautiful memories of both the people and the congregation.



I Buy a Free Suit

The reason for coming to the US was to go to Sylvia's wedding. I don't get all enraptured about this sort of event like some folks do. In spite of the general atmosphere of felicity, I become somewhat oppressed by some of the little impositions which protocol makes on those involved. Especially on the dad of the bride.

I was painfully aware that a wedding in the US would probably invade some of my tropical air space. This meant that sooner or later I would have to face the issue of wearing a suit to the wedding.

My pragmatic wife approached the subject from the angle of where we would buy a

suit. Not if. I tried to drum up some low-key support and actually didn't do too bad. But since I wasn't going to be living with my sympathizers, but with my wife, common sense pointed to non-resistance as the most practical course to be followed.

So my wife and daughters and I headed to the JC Penney store in Merced, California.

The saleslady who took care of us immediately sensed that she would have to earn her commission by the sweat of her brow. Sizing me up with a schoolteacherish glare, she managed a grim, professional smile.

Basically, I had three styles of suits to choose from: expensive, expensiver and expensivest. That simplified matters, because it eliminated the last two and I could now concentrate on the expensive model.

As I remember it, there were only two colors on the expensive suit rack. My wife and daughters eliminated one of them, so that left only one expensive suit to choose from. Everything indicated at this point that I was doomed to purchasing a suit. But I didn't totally despair. What if none of them would fit me?

I was coerced into trying on the coat. The sleeves were obviously too long. By pulling my shoulders back, I was able to gleefully show the saleslady that only the tip of my fingers protruded from the sleeves.

I suspect that by now she was beginning to enjoy her part in this little game. After all, all the ladies were rooting for her team. Smugly she informed me that a tailor could alter the sleeves.

Now came the dreaded part. The trousers. I would have to step into the little cubicle dedicated to this purpose and try the trousers on. Obviously outnumbered, I entered the cubicle and soon emerged walking on the pant legs. My wife said, "Oh, I can alter the pant legs myself." Only I didn't smile.

The candle of hope flickered weakly one last time when the saleslady said, "Since it's Friday afternoon, I'm not sure the tailor will be able to alter the sleeves in time for the wedding." I think that one look at my face convinced her that no effort was too great to see me huddled on the canvas. She added, "But I'll call and find out." The lady soon came back and applied the coup de grâce. The tailor would alter the sleeves in time for the wedding for a ten dollar fee. I didn't waste any saliva making an issue out of the ten bucks. Meekly I agreed that we would take the expensive suit.

By now the saleslady was managing a fairly congenial smile. So I informed her that it wasn't through any of her efforts that I was taking the suit. Down deep even she knew it was a case of commercial predestination. My own household walked into the JC Penney store determined that I would walk out with a suit. That's what happened. But wait.

I didn't buy that suit. I got it for free. You see, I was willing to pay one hundred and seven dollars and 24 cents (sales tax included), plus ten bucks to the tailor, to maintain domestic peace. So, seen from this perspective, I donated that amount to JC Penney and they donated a suit for Sylvia's wedding. I didn't tell the saleslady this. Why spoil her day? ▲

Silver Lake

When I was in the second or third grade, my schoolteacher read us the Little House books. Some years later I discovered them in the McPherson Public Library, and finally the set was purchased, first in English and then in Portuguese. I have lost count of the number of times these books have been read.

When my Grandma Becker was still alive, one day I was telling her about the book, *On the Shores of Silver Lake*. Imagine my surprise when she told me that she grew up on the shores of that lake.

During our brief stay in South Dakota, where we attended Pat & Sylvia's reception, we made a quick trip to De Smit to visit Silver Lake and the Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum. It costs five bucks, but it's worth every cent of it.

The big attractions are the surveyor's house where the Ingalls family passed their first winter in that area, and the house that Pa built.

Silver Lake today is more of a slough than a lake, but that doesn't detract from its historical importance.

We tend to think that the Little House books were written about the Ingalls family because they were special people. Really, that's not the case. They are special people because the Little house books were written about them. With a "Laura," dozens of other families could have become equally enchanting.

I have pounded on this key before, and pound again. We have stories which need to be written. We have friends and relatives who should tell their story to someone while there is time. But for each story there must be a Laura—a miniature Laura, at least—who is willing to listen and write. If you're unsure of yourself, have someone edit it for you.

Wake up! The grave tells no stories. ▲

On Hutterites and Head Coverings

My brother-in-law, Frank Burns, used to buy wool from the Hutterites in S Dakota, so he wanted to show us one of their colonies. It was a fascinating experience.

I wondered if they would be prepared to give us a tour of the premises, especially without any advance notice. They were. I got the impression that it must be a pretty commonplace occurrence.

We had three tour guides, girls in their latter teens. Betty, the most articulate of the three, did an excellent job, especially considering that English is not their first language.

The Hutterite women, at least on this colony, wear a head covering very similar to that of the Holdeman women. It is possibly a bit larger and they wear it tied down all the time—well, sort of at least.

The girls who took us around had their coverings fastened on top with four bobby pins. One of them kept it tied all the time. The other two, however, were almost

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constantly messing with their coverings. They would untie them and let the ends hang straight down for a few moments and then tie them again. Next they would untie them and then nudge the ends back over their shoulders. Sometimes they would almost make a ponytail out of the covering.

We toured the community kitchen where the meals for the entire colony are prepared. Stainless steel was the order of the day. Besides the enormous soup kettle, the grill, counter tops, sinks, etc., the entire back wall was made of stainless steel with a beautiful swirl design in it. Even the floor around the stove, sink, etc. was made of this material.

We went into their large refrigerated pantry where they have shelves and shelves of canned goods. Needless to say, they do their own canning.

They showed us their dining areas. The small children, up to five years of age, I believe, have their own dining room and are served by the older children. There is a second dining room for the children from six to 15, and finally a large area for everyone else.

They have a well organized butcher house, their own mechanic shop, and, in a few words, everything it takes for the operation of a colony of 150 people.

It was especially while showing us their church that Betty did show a trace of dissatisfaction with their system. Amongst themselves they speak low German. Their church services, however, are conducted in high German, which the younger ones don't understand very well. We asked if they sang in German. "Yes," she said, "we do. I enjoy singing in English, but . . ." and here her tone of voice said more than her actual words, ". . . I suppose it will be a long time before that happens."

I am told that these Hutterite colonies, beneath the veneer which we see, suffer from some of the same maladies inherent to Communist regimes: indolence on the part of some, which means the workload is not evenly distributed, high consumption of alcoholic beverages, and special privileges for close relatives and friends of the farm boss.

I tried to imagine our Colony in Brazil operating under this system, but all I come up with is a nightmare. It wouldn't work. Fortunately.

I don't suppose Betty and her friends realized that I was paying as much attention to their coverings as to what they were showing us. They probably don't realize that I got the impression that the covering is becoming a burden to them.

But before we get too hard on Betty, let's remember that people probably pay more attention than what we think to the way our sisters wear their coverings. And doubtlessly they too arrive at certain conclusions. What do you suppose they think—and this is their right, just like it was mine on the Hutterite colony—when after church some sisters can't even wait to get to the car to remove their tie-down covering? Or when, at a wedding reception, once the actual serving is over, the tie-downs come down?

I enjoyed my visit to the Hutterite colony. We were treated very well. And I think I learned a lesson. Maybe more of us should visit them. ▲

Brazil

Farewell to a Pioneer

Clara Miller

Enos and Clara Miller moved to Brazil almost 27 years ago, back in the days when having the pioneer spirit was a definite plus.

Now, over a quarter of a century later, Clara has left us.

Clara was a pioneer. Life in Brazil in the beginning wasn't easy, and yet I don't remember having ever heard her complain. When they moved, they had seven children. The oldest was in her early teens and the youngest several months old. Later they had another child. Today in N America it isn't easy to raise a family of eight. Imagine what it was like in Brazil without a house, without a stove, without a washing machine, without any of the conveniences that are considered an absolute necessity today.

Clara did it, and she did it with a smile. If there is any one thing she will be remembered for, it will be her gentle smile, a smile that she was able to maintain even in her most difficult moments.

Enos & Clara built up three different farms in Brazil. They cleared the land, built a shed, part of which was partitioned off as living quarters, with sheets as room dividers, then a house, planted a garden, and everything else that goes with getting a farm set up. Most people grow weary with setting up one farm, but Clara helped set up three.

Back in the first years, I helped Enos on the farm to augment my school teaching salary. I'll never forget harvest time. Rice was cut with a little combine with a VW engine and a six foot header. Instead of a grain bin, there was a little platform on the back of the combine where someone stood and bagged up the grain as it ran out of a little spout. The sacks were dumped on the ground.

Often we would be out until 10 o'clock at night picking up the bags of rice, hauling them home and piling them on a concrete slab, where they would be dried the following day—if the weather permitted. Since all this was manual labor, we were usually a crew of at least six.

When finally the last sack was hauled in from the field, one hungry bunch of people would head for the house. The supper we would enjoy is something I will never forget. It was always simple, but there was plenty. Best of all, though, was the good feeling one had being in that home.

They say we should give people their roses while they live. This is true, but some bouquets must wait until later. And so the bouquet that I today dedicate to Clara, has in it, first of all, the rose of a true Christian. Secondly, the rose of a Christian wife. Then of a Christian mother. And finally of a model deacon's wife.

I make no apologies for dedicating this little bouquet to Clara Miller. She deserves it, for she rests in peace. ▲