

shows them that you have your dials on, so blink back at them to show them that you have your dials on.

"IF YOU HAVE A HEADLIGHT THAT'S FAILED, THE SMART THING TO DO IS TO TRAVEL CLOSE BEHIND SOMEBODY ELSE until you can get it fixed. That way you're too close to have it seen by an approaching policeman as he's already passed you before he can stop you, & not too many of them want to turn around to nail you for a headlight. But if they have plenty of time up ahead to see you coming with one light out they can easily pull you over."

DRIVING LESSON WITH AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION DAD WAS RECENTLY TEACHING ONE OF US HOW TO DRIVE A CAR WITH AN AUTOMATIC GEAR SHIFT & here are some of his pointers:

"I DON'T EVER RECOMMEND BUYING STANDARD GEAR SHIFT CARS AT ALL IF YOU HAVE A CHOICE. I'd rather buy an automatic as an automatic is the best way to have someone learn to drive, & it's also easier for you experienced drivers. The dear old Ark had an automatic transmission:

"OH, THERE ARE PROPONENTS & ENTHUSIASTS FOR EACH KIND OF GEAR SYSTEM, EACH SYSTEM HAS ITS OWN FANS. I'm a fan for the automatic transmission because I'm lazier. Some people claim that you get better mileage with a stick shift but I believe that you do better with an automatic because most people don't know when to shift gears.

"THE AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION KNOWS WHEN IT IS BEST TO SHIFT & it will always shift at that speed going up or down, either one. This is best for rather ignorant drivers, as most of them don't know which speed to shift at, & this really saves racing the engine too much & wasting gas, & is certainly a lot easier."

"YOU CAN CONCENTRATE MORE ON YOUR DRIVING BY KEEPING BOTH HANDS ON THE WHEEL while the car does the thinking & shifting for you, & you can keep your mind & eyes on the street & your driving & let the car do the shifting. I'm all for it & I wouldn't buy a stick shift unless there was nothing else, but when we buy second-hand cars we usually have to take what we get.

"DON'T EVER LEAVE A CAR WITH AN AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION IN 'PARK' unless you're only standing there temporarily, & you just don't want to pull out the emergency brake. If you are pulled over to pick somebody up & are going to be there a little while & you don't want to keep your foot on the brake & you don't want

the car to roll, just shift it into 'park'!

"JUST DON'T EVER LEAVE IT IN 'PARK' ALONE IF THERE'S GOING TO BE ANY GREAT STRAIN ON THE CAR, such as on a street, steep hill, or a very steep grade. Don't just leave it in 'park', but put it in 'park' & put on the emergency brake both. The best thing to do in that case is to put on the emergency brake first & then put it into 'park'. Otherwise, between stopping & putting it into 'park' you might accidentally take your foot off of the brake & it would just be hanging in 'park'."

"PUT THE BRAKE ON FIRST & THEN INTO 'PARK'. I recommend that at all times; that if you're going to stop permanently where you want to set the brake, set the brake first & then put it into 'park'. That prevents the car from rolling & putting strain on the 'park' gear, because sometimes even in 'park' it will roll a few inches until it hits the gear & if it rolls too hard it can break it.

"ALL THE REST OF THE DRIVING IS LIKE DRIVING ANY STANDARD TRANSMISSION CAR. You may find these brakes quite sensitive as it has power steering & power brakes. So don't slam the brakes too hard, & with power steering don't swerve too quick. I really don't care all that much for power steering myself as it is apt to make you swerve when you are driving. So watch out for that, as the steering is too easy & the brakes are too easy, & you may even find that the acceleration is too easy."

"CARS ARE JUST LIKE HORSES, YOU HAVE TO GET USED TO DRIVING THAT PARTICULAR CAR as there is all the difference in the world between driving various models, even if they are all automatics. They steer differently, the weight is different, the brakes are different & it's kind of like an art or an instrument. You just have to learn the peculiarities of each particular car."

"SO YOU CAN SEE THAT GOING OUT WITH DAD IS QUITE AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE, for which we are so thankful as his counsel is such a big help to us all. None of us are mechanics, but thanks to Dad's patience & diligence to train us, we are learning slowly but surely how to be good stewards over the car that the Lord has entrusted us with. God bless & keep you all in your travels for Jesus!

WHILE THE INTERIOR OF THE TRAILER IS BEING PREPARED, the boys are taking down the awning, closing the gas bottles, de-stabilising & hitching up. We have found that if possible it is best to disconnect the dolly wheel entirely when travelling, as well as TV antennas etc. so that there is nothing on the tongue that could scrape the road. Every centimeter counts! Apart from checking that the caravan is ready to roll, attention must be given to extra towing vehicle, which will be under extra strain. We check out all the fluid levels carefully, praying that the Lord will show us anything that is awry before we pull out. From time to time it is good to check the lugnuts on car & trailer to be sure they are tight.

RECENTLY, JUST BEFORE PULLING OUT WITH A GOOD-SIZED CARAVAN we discovered a small leak in the radiator of the car. It was so small as to almost have passed unnoticed, but it could have become a major problem once we had gotten underway. Happily, we were able to improvise a repair, using a toothpick & high resistance glue, & it held for the trip, TTL!

ONCE WE ARE HITCHED UP, IF DAD IS THERE HE WILL MAKE ONE LAST CHECK of the interior of the caravan. Any unlatched doors, loose items that might move around or scratch walls, open windows? (He says that it is good to leave the back side of one vent tilted slightly open to keep the caravan aired out while travelling.) We also leave the front & back curtain open, so that the driver can have as clear a view as possible. In checking the interior, Dad will point out a potential danger & say, "Now, what's wrong with that?" He constantly emphasises to us the importance of doing all that we can to prevent accidents! "Well, one little accident or big mess to clean up will teach you never to let that happen again!"

THE INSIDE BEING READY FOR TRAVEL, THE LAST CHECK IS MADE ON THE EXTERIOR OF THE TRAILER. We check, amongst other things, that the stabilisers are properly up, the mirrors securely on, the hitch correctly attached, nothing hanging under the caravan (such as a water hose), that the trailer brake cord has plenty of slack & that the signal lights are all working properly. This is also a good time to check the tire pressure on all tires to see that they are inflated to the correct pressure. Dad recommends that each car has a good-quality tire pressure gauge, as well as a good handpump.

CARAVANING WITH FATHER! --By James Penn., Peter A. and Alfred.

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THE HOUR OF DECISION HAD FINALLY COME! It reminded us a little of the story in the letter "For God's Sake Follow God!" (4:62): "As the lady asked during the storm, 'Oh Captain, what are we going to do?' He said, 'I guess we'll just have to trust the Lord!' She said, 'Oh my God, has it come to that?'"

THE CONTRACT ON THE HOUSE IN WHICH WE HAD BEEN LIVING FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS HAD ALMOST EXPIRED, & although we had been looking high & low for a new place, we had yet to find something that really fitted the bill. The tourist season was starting as well, & we had found that the rents had increased by up to 400%, which put many houses way out of our reach. For years Dad had shown a great interest in caravanning, expounding on all its advantages & he had often mused over the possibility of us all having to move into a campground & had warned us to be ready at a moments notice. However it had been dismissed as being too impractical, due to security, no telephone, lack of privacy & the probability that we would not get too much work done, but rather spend most of our time surviving. It seemed so impractical, & really only a last resort, a real "survival" scenario!

HOW WRONG THE NEXT FEW WEEKS WERE TO PROVE US, AS DAD, THE TRUE GYPSY KING, LED US INTO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF CAMPING & CARAVANING which, until then, most of us had only read about in the Letters. One couple had been caravanning for one year already, but this was our first group experience! As Dad later said, "What better sample could we be to the family than to have our top unit living in caravans! This life will help you understand & have more compassion on all those in our family who are going mobile!" The transition was quite a change for most of us, but we all made it successfully & agreed that it was one of the best things that had happened to us in quite awhile. We all learned & are still learning! So much, & Dad & Maria have often encouraged us to write down all the lessons so that we could pass them on to the rest of the family, many of whom are in similar situations. So we hope that these experiences will be a big help to many of you in your life as gypsies of the Lord!

OUR FIRST MAJOR MOVE WAS MADE IN STAGES, over a few weeks, during which some of us stayed in various campgrounds,

getting used to this new lifestyle. It was so inspiring to see how the Lord specifically led Dad directly to a certain corner of a certain campground that was really tailor-made for us, surrounded by woods, quiet, lots of shade, few neighbours, friendly management, reasonable rates, necessary sanitary facilities & good communications nearby. Really the Lord's set-up! We all loved the life there & found that we were able to spend as much time, if not more on our respective ministries than we had living in a conventional house! TTL!

AS IN EVERYTHING THAT DAD DOES, HE IS VERY THOROUGH & METHODICAL, & as we were to see in moving caravans, he is no different. Here we were, a bunch of greenhorns, most of us never even having pulled a caravan, involved in moving a number of caravans & vehicles a long distance; no small matter. So he had to teach us everything from scratch, but teach us he did, right down to the smallest detail!

DAD PLACES A LOT OF IMPORTANCE ON PRE-MOVE PLANNING & PREPARATION, once the destination has been decided on. Before actually moving the caravans, Dad, Maria & one or two others will often go ahead to scout out the land. As he says to us when leaving, "I go to prepare a place for you!" They usually visit most of the campgrounds in the area to see which meet the requirements for our operation. Among other things they check the size & position of the plots, & whether the main & secondary roads leading to the camp are easy to manoeuvre with a good-sized caravan, a point which he considers very important, as he knows how nerve-racking & dangerous it is to have to be manoeuvring loaded caravans through narrow lanes & sidestreets. Once he has visited a campground, he marks on his map the location as well as the pros & cons of it, the prices etc. He is very conscious of the prices & will refuse to consider places that are really out to gouge the customers.

AFTER THE PROSPECTIVE CAMPGROUND HAS BEEN CHOSEN, he goes over the map with a fine tooth comb, checking all the possible access roads & if time permits, he drives over them to see which is best for caravan travel. Of course this requires a little extra time & effort, but in this case it sure saved the rest of the drivers a lot of trouble as he routes us as much as possible away from towns & keeps us on the main highways & motorways. In our last

move he found us a peaceful secondary road that had us completely bypass a major town as well as some very tricky & dangerous intersections which would have been very hard to negotiate. He says that a caravan driver has to have nerves of steel, but he doesn't believe in putting them to the test more than is absolutely necessary.

ONCE THE ROUTE IS CHOSEN, HE HAS THE DRIVERS MARK IT ON THEIR MAPS & WILL EVEN TAKE THEM OVER THE ROUTE, if feasible, to point out the possible danger spots & potential pitfalls. Before actually breaking camp & moving he makes sure that each driver knows the exact route, so that he can concentrate more on his driving & less on map reading. Of course this is where the navigator comes in, a very important job when towing our home on wheels.

WHEN THE APPOINTED DAY COMES ON WHICH WE ARE TO START OUR MOVE, the vehicles & trailers that are to go pack up & start to break camp. This, as in all phases of breaking, moving & setting up camp, requires a lot of teamwork. We learned a lot by trial & error, but TTL we are getting it down to where we can prepare the caravans for travel pretty quickly, as we have had to do sometimes.

WHOEVER IS ACTUALLY LIVING IN THE CARAVAN PREPARES THE INTERIOR FOR TRAVEL, putting any heavy objects such as books & typewriters on the floor as well as anything loose. Dad has admonished us, "Anything that can move will move & if it's heavy it could become as lethal as a cannonball & fly right through the wall of the caravan if you stop quickly." So everything heavy or loose goes on the floor & is firmly braced to keep it from moving. Kitchen utensils which normally hang in the stove area are removed so that they will not scratch the walls, water jugs are emptied so that the load is lighter & no glass objects are touching each other. Dad has forbidden us to use or keep breakable cups or dishes in the caravans as they are just an invitation for trouble, so use plastic as much as possible.

IN ALL THESE PHASES OF MOVING Dad has taught us to go slow, check everything as thoroughly as possible, as just one mistake or oversight could cause serious injury or damage to others, yourself or your trailer. A stitch in time saves nine, & it's better to build a fence at the top of a cliff than a hospital at the bottom.

WE WERE ABLE TO FIND A PUMP THAT CAN BE USED BY ONE PERSON, & in a matter of minutes it adds quite a few kilos of pressure to the tire. It is worth investing in a good-quality one, as cheap ones will take a lot of work to make even a little difference in a car tire & very quickly break, as we can testify! (Note: If you ever have to pass under a low overhang of some sort & can't quite make it, one possible solution is to partially deflate your tires, pass under & then inflate them again. We had to do this & it worked quite well. Another solution is to have as many people as possible get in the trailer, to weigh it down.)

IN PREPARING TO BREAK CAMP & PULL OUT, you might have to do some manoeuvring by hand to put your caravan in position so that the car can hitch up. Hopefully this doesn't happen too often, but if it does, everyone must be very safety-conscious & really work as a team to avoid any mishaps. Dad is very concerned that no one strains themselves & refuses to allow anyone with back problems to push caravans. However, if the situation warrants it, he will call on all able-bodied men & women to push. We all (even Maria!) get into the act, & the Lord has always given us the strength that we need, with no injuries, TTL! This is partly due to the fact that Dad insists that when we push, we put our back to the caravan, brace our feet & push with our legs. He says, "After all, your legs are quite strong. They support your body most of the day!" Dad also sees to it that everyone is wearing work gloves which saves lots of pinched hands, cuts etc. He asks that we keep all tools necessary for moving inside near the door, so they are available without having to dig through the caravan.

BEFORE WE ACTUALLY START MOVING THE CARAVAN he is certain that each person knows exactly where they are meant to push & in what direction, & that anyone not involved stays well clear of the operation. Whenever you stop, be sure to put on the handbrakes & chock the tires. He has mentioned that if a caravan ever did break loose & start rolling, that we should not try to stop it at risk to ourselves, as "We can replace the caravan but we can't replace you!" Dad summed up the whole question of manoeuvring caravans in small spaces so aptly: "Happiness, in this case, is not a cul de sac." (tight situation!)

THE LAST THING THAT WE TRY TO TAKE

CARE OF BEFORE OUR DEPARTURE is to see that the vehicles & caravans are clean. If you don't have time to clean & hose off the whole caravan, make sure that the back is clean, this being the part that most people are going to be looking at on the highway.

SO, AFTER ALL THESE LAST MINUTE CHECKS & DESPERATE UNITED PRAYER FOR A SAFE JOURNEY, we start up the vehicle & pull out. We try as often as possible to travel in convoy, so that if one car has any problems, the other is there to help. & we establish a communication system between the vehicles, such as flashing the lights or sounding the horn in case something does go wrong. We go along the pre-arranged route, the navigators helping the drivers as well as keeping an eye on the other vehicle. We try to travel at a time of day when there is little traffic & avoid trying to "rush", but just take it easy, as Dad has observed a maximum speed of 80kph. If your car & caravan are not too big, you can even drive along behind a big truck (but not too close). This will help pull you along.

DURING THE LAST MOVE DAD CAUTIONED THE DRIVERS TO ALWAYS KEEP THEIR DRIVING STEADY, no matter what happens, as the slightest jerk of the wheel can flip the caravan. He also reminded us to always be aware of which gear we are in & to be very wary of wind currents caused by val-lup trucks passing. Sometimes even cars can cause them & we had a few hairy moments on one move on the freeway when one of the caravans was swaying back & forth each time a big truck passed it. Dad is also very against stopping on any kind of an upgrade, as you lose all the momentum that you have gained.

DURING A RECENT MOVE WE FOUND THAT ONE OF THE CARS BEGAN TO OVERHEAT while towing a caravan. Dad said afterwards that this was probably due to the fact that the driver did not downshift enough, especially on inclines. Even with automatic transmissions he said that it is very important to use your lower gears whenever necessary, as it can save a great deal of wear & tear on the motor, as well as stopping it from overheating.

ANOTHER TIME WHEN YOUR MOTOR IS APT TO OVERHEAT is when you have been running your engine hard on the highway, & you stop, but keep the engine running. So watch out for motors overheating & if it does, exercise extreme caution in opening