

Rio De Janeiro, Brazil March 10, 2001  
Reunion/tragedy/blessings

## Preface

Today is Sunday, June 24, 2001. Wendy and I are traveling to Salt Lake City to spend a couple of days writing this chapter in our life history. We have been blessed substantially since that date in March, we are healing and it appears that we will have only minor disability from our wounds. We are grateful for the service of all the many people who assisted us in these last few months, including but not limited to George, President and Sister Anderson, Doctor Marcello the many doctors and nurses at Samaritano hospital, the people of Brazil, Jon Huntsman, the first presidency, missionary department, and all good people of many religious beliefs for their prayers and faith.

I am especially grateful to my four children here at home for their faith, strength, wisdom, and common sense involving the tragedy. To my son Brad who was a perfect friend in the hospital and since. I am so very sorry to bring this upon him. He has been a most compassionate victim.

And to my dear wife of nearly 30 years, Wendy was amazing. She maintained calm in the face of disaster. She maintained and expressed faith to all who inquired. She showed great sympathy and service to Brad and I in our need. Thank you very much.

It was Saturday night after 8:00pm Rio time. It was raining, no pouring rain, falling in sheets. We had completed our visits in Sao Goncalo. We were crossing the long bridge across the bay into Rio de Janeiro to our hotel. I was driving a Volkswagen 4door rental. Brad was riding in the front, and Wendy was in the back. The rain was coming down so hard we had to dodge the big puddles on the road that would swamp and stall the car. Traffic was slow and many had already been stopped with water trouble. We moved forward.

As we came to the main freeway between Rio and the international airport, I chose the wrong ramp and found us heading to the airport instead of toward downtown Rio. In Brazil, on the freeway, they have returno. It is a neat little pullover, turn around and head the other way. No such luck. We drove on and on and no returno. Finally in desperation we looked for an overpass with an exit. Going slow and trying to see through the rain, one came up.

I looked in the rear view mirror, saw a car in the far right lane, I signaled and exited right to the overpass. As I exited I looked in the mirror and saw that the car was exiting also. No problem! Suddenly the car sped up and pulling along the side of us, forcing us off the road. Then as we stopped they pulled directly in front of us. Two men emerged from the car. I saw the driver get out, and hold up a large gun. Brad said "this is it". I looked at the driver and realized he was going to shoot me. The voice in my head said "go" I did. No it was not a still small voice, it was loud and emphatic –GO. I went. I slammed the gas pedal to the floor and dumped the clutch, veered around their car hitting it as we went. I was immediately shot in the chest. They were shooting repeatedly, and glass was flying everywhere. Brad yelled, "I've been shot!" I knew I had been hit. As the car sped up, the engine was tacked out in first. I tried to lift my left arm to grab the steering wheel to shift, but it would not move. I knew I had been hit in the arms, but did not know the extent. My brain said "Garth, what are you going to do now? The voice yelled again in my head "go". I let go of the wheel with the right hand and grabbed second gear and hit it again. Right arm is still working! They seemed to keep shooting all the way down the road. As I drove I felt Brad place his left hand on my head followed by his right. The words, "by the power of the Melchezedek priesthood I bless you that all will be well. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen".

We arrived in Rio early Thursday morning after an all-night flight from Newark N. J. airport. We left to catch a plane from Las Vegas Wednesday morning. My secretary, Kristy drove us to the airport. The plan was to have the family drive the car and truck to Vegas to meet us a week from Friday later. Plans were to have a family lunch in St. George on the way home and then the big bar-b-que that night in cedar. The flight to Newark and the overnight to Rio were exhausting, but at the end would be our missionary son, and so excitement filled our spirits. .

The flight arrived right on time, and we worked our way to customs and immigration. We were carrying tons of stuff for the missionaries, members, and gifts for the members and investigators. We had many jars of peanut butter, macaroni, C.T.R. rings, white shirts, ties and dresses from the Deseret Industries to help investigators feel comfortable at church. All were pressed and ready to go. We had a CD. writer for a bishop and a water bed heater for the stake president. We had other computer equipment for Brad to get everything perfect before he left the mission. Brad had served in the mission office for many months and they relied on him to keep everything running smooth. With the customs declaration filled out listing all the stuff of value we approached. Two

gates labeled "something to declare", and "nothing to declare". We go to the one with something to declare. The Brazilian looks at the declaration and tries to understand the first item, "water bed heater". We try to explain using English vs Portuguese. Finally he grunts for us to go to the "nothing to declare" line and they waive us through. On to immigration, passports in order, and on down the hall. As we emerged into an open area, I could see Elder Green's head above the crowd. Fantastic!

Following a warm reception and long hugs, we work our way to the hertz rental booth where Brad lets me wing it in English to rent the car. I decide to take full coverage (I never do this) on the Volkswagen Santana very popular in Brazil. We are in the car and on to the freeway towards downtown Rio. Brad has us drive by the mission office, the Hotel Scorial, which would be home base, and the president's home. We got the layout of the city then back to the hotel and we sign for the presidential suite. It had one queen bed, one single, fancy bathroom, and air conditioning that almost works. We're all set. Brad leaves us to go to the office to do computer work. We will see you tonight at the president's suite. "Don't be late, they will let you in to hear us sing the mission song, I'm the pianist". "We'll be there".

We went down to the streets to a buffet restaurant. Food looks great, but we did not understand the weighing in process. Get food, weigh it then eat. O.k. I used a credit card, easy. Money will come later. I got a wad at the airport, but not used it yet. It is nap time.

We leave extra early for the president's home, make sure we know our way around. No problem, lots of time. We drove down to the beaches and along the Copacabana, and then the Ipanema. Beautiful white sand beaches, and not too crowded. Big hotels, the most famous is the Copacabana hotel \$400+ a night. We like ours just fine, \$80 for the suite. Then back through the city to the hotel. Still early, but we will wait with Idalia, the president's maid. Finally it is our turn.

The missionaries were standing in a circle with their president and Sister Anderson. About half were Brazilian. Elder Green takes his place at the piano and begins, very loud and very fast. It was a hoot. With 25 missionaries singing their song for the last time, and Elder Green showing off for his parents. Wow. After hugs, handshakes, and warm wishes, the van comes to take the Brazilians to their hotel to await morning flights home, and another van to the international airport for the Americans overnight flight to the states. Everyone is heading home and we will be in just a few days. We hang around as Sister Anderson wants Brad to look at her laptop computer for her, and she wants to make a recording of him playing the mission song. They record a couple of tries, and then goodbye. We probably won't see them again before we leave. Little did we know?

Early the next morning we woke, caught an early breakfast and headed north before the traffic to the Vitoria area. The bus takes over 8 hours, but we can do better, but not much however. Travel through Brazil is truly an experience. The scenery is fantastic, so many shades of green. The traffic however is horrific. Drivers pass and swerve in and out. A little practice and I was as bad as them. Brad eventually took a turn. Arrived early afternoon, good \_\_\_ nice hotel and then the adventure began.

Now we are off the oiled roads and onto the dirt paths of the humble community of Cariacica, Brad's first area. We go house to house, happy people, all with a bottle of water in the fridge, and sometimes passion fruit juice. They all knew the missionaries would only drink bottled water. Every one remembered Brad and warm greetings continued all afternoon and evening.

At the branch president's house, the missionaries happened along. All had the juice. The missionaries were Brazilian, and one had on tennis shoes. Later Brad was disgusted I had noticed. He explained that the Brazilian dress shoes did not hold up like the \$100 docs and that it would only be for a few days

until he would get new ones after the home stake sent money. The new ones would see him through his mission. Man I would have loved to take those guys to Mister Macs for the afternoon. A side note, a month later president Hinckley announced the creation of the perpetual missionary education fund at the priesthood session. I could not help thinking of this young Brazilian missionary and can testify of the divinity of the churches plan to educate its most faithful, its missionaries from the third world countries. Perfect.

After dark, we happened along a street market where we purchased bananas and some tapes. People were there buying fish, vegetables, eggs etc., and packing them away in wheel barrows, wagons and whatever. We would pay in the currency and then tip with a one dollar bill. Word spread and we had to hurry away to avoid too much attention and possible problems with our American money. It was fun to see the eyes light up with the sight of dollars. Especially the kids.

At the end we met the missionaries at the apartment where Brad had lived. He was proud of the wiring job he had done for the water heater. It was the shower head, and had 2 wires running down to the light switch. U.L. approved??? I doubt it. It did work however. We left peanut butter and other gifts with the missionaries and headed back to our hotel. I could not help thinking how scared our missionaries would be as they lay on the pad in a rock house, with bars for security, little lights, and all alone. Wow, who said a mission was not an adventure.

The following morning we left early for the long drive back toward Rio. That evening we repeated the process in Sao Goncalo. Gifts were running low. I'm thinking of ways to get more southwest plumbing hats air freighted in for the rest of our visit. We had great visits and a nice dinner with a member and her husband and little girl. More visits and then it is late, and raining hard and we work our way to the main road, and then the freeway that crosses the bay into Rio. Oops, we are on the wrong ramp and heading toward the airport, instead of towards Rio.

As we sped away from the gunmen, I knew Brad had been shot, but not how many or how badly. I knew my arm was wounded and my right chest was hit. I did not know if any had hit Wendy. I remember being surprised that I could think and drive. I looked for people and saw some buildings and houses. There was a corner store with people in front of it. I aimed at it. My mind was getting fussy, but I steered straight at it- over shooting a little. I ran into the steps going up two and back down one as the rear window fell out of the car shattering. At this point, I pleaded for an ambulance and went semi unconscious. Brad got out and looked for help. The people went into a panic, but undirected they did little. Brad looked for a phone. He called the presidents house and said we were shot and were trying to go to the hospital. The second call got the missionaries and they got the message. Wendy was trying to get help and in desperation prayed for help. George, our Samaritan, came along in a white van. He stopped and offered assistance. Brad informed me there was no ambulance and that we had to go. The Brazilians around drug me from the car and into the middle seat of the van. Brad got in back and Wendy in front. She reached back to me to try to stop the bleeding. I had too many holes and she didn't have enough hands. Brad was trying to help me, but was badly injured himself.

I do not recall the Bom Sucesso Hospital entry, but Wendy reported that the emergency room was crowded with people trying to get in. We had made a very quick trip thanks to George who knew the way. I know that I had realized that I could not breathe and that my lungs were filled with blood. I remember the three guys standing over me. I came to when Doctor Marcello cut an X in my side and began trying to puncture my lung. On the fourth attempt, he was successful and within seconds, I knew I would probably live. I remember how good it felt to get tiny little breaths of air.

Brads injury was not as life threatening, so he was delayed. He reports that he was in pain, but had

to wait for me. They cleaned him up with alcohol, and they wouldn't give him a painkiller, as they said that he was going out soon for the operation and would be given an anesthetic. It took forever. He woke up later on the fourth floor with some big shorts on, and a cast on his arm. We are not sure whether he had been operated on at Bom Sucesso Hospital.

I remember the nurses taking bottles of blood away and bringing empty bottles to take their place. I knew that my arm was shattered, but I realized that I would have to wait until further in the night to be worked on. It was just not a high priority. I understood. Sometime after midnight, I was taken into their operating room where the doctor applied a form of local anesthesia, and proceeded to set the bones. One fellow would pull on the arm, and the doctor would attempt to line the bones up. The bullet holes seemed the logical place to put his fingers to do the lineup. Although the anesthesia was not perfect, it helped a ton. I was observing the procedure. Afterwards a crude cast was placed on the arm.

Wendy waited in the entry and was asked to speak to the police. No Portuguese. Then the tourist police woman arrived and helped. Brad and I were in operating rooms. When the missionaries arrived, with President Anderson, and then two more missionaries they would not let them in to see us or give us a blessing. The four missionaries gave Mom a blessing and asked our father in heaven to accept that blessing for our benefit and blessing as well. An orderly took Wendy to a sink where Brad was for her to wash up. Later when President and Sister Anderson came, and it was determined that we would probably be O.K., Wendy went back with them to the mission home.

## Cedar City

9:00 mst 12:00 midnight Rio, Jeff received a call from a Brother Owens from the missionary department reporting that there had been an accident with Brad and his father in Brazil, and that they had been fatally wounded. Jeff quizzed, "are they dead" no but are seriously injured and may not live. He left numbers for them to call in SLC and Rio. Jeff called home and talked to Mike and Phillip. Then he called Lori. She was on the road, and he left a message with the Yardley's to have her call, explaining the problem. They added notes to the door of her home. Mike and Phillip went to Jeff's house and Mike made many attempts to call for more information. Grandma Green was called, and when uncle John heard her upset, he got Aunt Lucy to take the rest of the call. Bishop Wilkins came to Jeff's house and the got George Hill to interpret Portuguese.

About 11 pm MST, 2am in Rio, George hill got through to the Brazilian phone system and Jeff talked to mom. Wendy was in shock and gave him numerous stories but they were confusing. Wendy did not know how we were, as we were still in operating room, but reported all she knew. Later that night when mom got back to the mission home, she called the kids again. At about this time Lori got home to find her in-laws waiting, notes on the door, and upset. She called Jeff who relayed what he knew. Mike and Phil called with new information from moms call that night from the mission home. She reported we were stable, but knew little else. Later Mike G and Lori talked, and Mike was very upset. It was Sunday morning and Lori promised that she would come there. She did and stayed together most of the next 8 days.

President Hinton called each bishop in the stake and called a stake wide fast. It was announced in each ward starting at 9am mst. At the same time things started happening in Brazil.

## Rio

About 9am Rio, a Bro Barclaugh came to the hospital. He was a member of the church, an American, and on military assignment at the consulate office in Rio. He reported that he thought I was

going to survive fine, but said he was worried about Brad. He said that they were not taking him to seriously, and that he was going to try to get us to a better hospital. He explained that it was difficult to get us transferred, that it would take money and clearances. He was going to the consulate that morning to start calling people and would do all he could. He left.

I believe visiting hours were about 1pm. I expected Wendy to come. She did. I was in intensive care unit. Brad was on the fourth floor, a regular ward. She visited me, explaining that they were doing everything they could to get us transferred to the private hospital. She then went up to check on Brad.

While she was upstairs, I heard a big commotion, and in came all these people waving papers and jabbering in Portuguese. The doctors and nurses came to me and started un-hooking me from the tubes and monitoring equipment. Others had the nurses and the doctor cornered at the desk going over the papers. I was moved onto a gurney and out into the hall. I could hear Brad and asked if he was O.K. He reported favorably and I did the same. Into the two waiting ambulances and off we went.

Upon arriving at the Samaritano hospital, they immediately assessed our injuries, and realized that Brad needed immediate surgery. I was prepped for surgery but waited a very long time while they worked on Brad. About midnight Sunday it was my turn. I came to in the ICU of the hospital. The nurse came in and explained that I had been hit in the right lung, with the bullet passing through coming out lower and near the center of my back. My left arm was shattered, and they had removed the bullet from my right arm with only minor damage. I had a large external fix on my left arm, with pins running into the arm in various places. The arm was stable and felt good. They had ballooned the lung and cleaned it out, and felt like it would be fine.

They reported that Brad was fine. The bullet had entered his left side, hitting lungs, stomach, diaphragm, and liver. It had not come out and they had not removed it. The other one broke his lower left arm they had operated and put a plate in it. That bullet was still in him as well. He was stable. In fact she pointed to a window, and it had a blind. She said Brad was there. I asked her to Turn him around so I could see him. She opened the blind and turned his bed. I could see him and him me. We gave each other the thumbs up sign. That was a good morning.

### Sunday Cedar City

Little word came during Sunday. The fasts had been organized; different areas received word at different times. Little was known until Rex Shipp called. He was working on the insurance and had talked to the mission home, and said that we had been moved to the better hospital. This was the word they kids had been waiting to hear.

Rumors had been rampant. Lots of incorrect stories were flying. The kids called Wendy to make sure we really had been moved and that we were still alive. Visitors were a steady stream to the house and on the phone. The kids told people what they knew, but little was known. Lori created a list of people to call when news was received. You were lucky to be on her list. The news media did not come until Monday, and that brought a whole new set of problems.

### Rio

On Sunday afternoon the press arrived and President Anderson talked to them. A press conference was set up for Monday morning with Wendy. Elder Jagger was the translator it lasted about an hour. Mom gave them the gospel, ready or not. The write up was favorable to the church and was in nearly every newspaper and TV station. Some of the missionaries were scared to death and would not leave

their apartments, but those who did were received by nearly everyone wanting to know more about us and the church.

Randal Carlyle, what a guy? Wendy could hardly get in to see us, but a call comes from the states, and the nurses think it is Brad's sister. They hand him on the phone, she says, hold for Randal. Brad is obedient. "This is Randal Carlyle with Channel 4 news, can I ask you some questions?" Yes! The next thing we know, Utah is listening to Brad on the 6 o'clock news. There is relief, celebrations, but the Church is mad at Randal and us for talking to him. I didn't see the harm, but we stopped talking to the press entirely. Lori was really the spokeswoman and she was fantastic.

The next few days were as to be expected. I was moved out of intensive care on Tuesday afternoon, and told that Brad would probably be a day later. A couple of hours later they brought him in. Our job was to heal sufficiently to be released, and head for home. Progress seemed slow to us at the time, but looking back, we did well. We experienced all the same new experiences of hospital stay, including, trouble making water, low appetite, first showers, reactions to medication, bed rashes, etc. Brad was an ideal roommate. His easy going temperament, compassionate personality, sense of humor made for smooth sailing through the days ahead. Never once, to this day, has he ever questioned the shooting or my reaction. I feel very responsible for the pain I put Brad, Wendy, and the other children through. I appreciate their forbearance with me. Brad, being young, good looking, and American, was a hit with the young cute nurses. He of course would have nothing to do with it. I on the other hand could see no harm in a little flirting for this going home missionary. I would help liven things up a little. First one nurse was especially kind to me, and tried to speak English. She was great. We became good friends, and Brad even allowed himself to visit casually. A black nurse of about 35 was super-efficient. All became good friends.

As they would allow the visitors in, some were not members. As I would listen to the talk, I could tell when Brad would strike into a first discussion. I would just rest back knowing I would not be called on to waive, grunt, or smile for at least half an hour. At the appropriate time then I would do my little part. A few discussions were given each day. Some times to hospital personnel, and some to non-member visitors. The visitors came in droves. They had to wait outside for a turn. Apparently one lady came four days before she could get in. They all wanted to say how sorry they were this had happened in their country. We understood and reassured them that we did not blame them.

Finally the tubes came out, drains removed, monitoring equipment unhooked. At one point Brad complained about something in his side. The doctor felt it, and wanted x-rays. In the morning they brought x-ray equipment in, left, came back and announced, "we have a bullet, the doctor came in, had Brad roll over, gave shots, cut his side and removed the bullet. It was passed around and we celebrated and examined it. Brad thought he should have it for a souvenir, no way, police evidence. It was mostly in tack and mushroomed on one side, probably where it hit his rib. This was the one that went through his stomach.

As improvement was experienced, talk of going home became more often. The church assured us that they would handle everything. I was released first on Tuesday, and I went to the mission home the next day Brad was released. This was Wednesday. Brad was invited to speak at a zone conference on Thursday morning. He did so, and with visits to the doctor completed, money paid, flights reserved, we were set for the long trip back to the states.

President and Sister Anderson came with us to the airport, along with two missionaries. Upon arriving, American airlines could not find the release from the hospital. Calls were made, and the release found. While they were looking, Wendy and President and Sister Anderson did some souvenir shopping. She had fun and got some cool stuff, and I didn't have to be involved. We were

sitting, laying, comfortable in the first class lounge.

The church had indeed made great flight arrangements; we were booked first class on American airlines to Miami. Jon Huntsman's Gulfstream jet, the one president Hinckley flies around in, was to meet us in Miami and bring us to Cedar City. The first class seats were truly wonderful. They would lay completely flat. The leg would extend to fit the big guy. All electric. The food was like a fine restaurant. Only 18 seats in first class the same space would have fit 50 in economy where we always fly. The seats had a price? Yes. \$2,900 each. My American Express card number on the ticket. No bill however was ever received. We went to the church office building today, and found out that indeed that was the price paid. Brad and mine were to be paid by the church, and Wendy's was to be charged to the stake in cedar. We need to find a way to pay back the general mission fund. We will! And we did pay for all three tickets by making a \$9000 donation to the missionary fund.

Jon huntsman's generosity cannot be paid except by being benevolent to others. We must try. We sent thank you letter and some small gifts

The flight was indeed great. Sleep was difficult, but some was had. We left at about 11:00 pm, Rio time, arriving after 4 am Miami. The airline personnel whisked us through customs, and immigration. Wow, fast. The brethren from the church, Allen Rogers from church missionary department, and a church doctor, met us with a van, and around the airport we went to the Huntsman's jet. Off we went straight to Cedar. The commercial airlines fly between 30,000 and 40,000 feet, and 500 miles an hour. We flew between 40,000 and 50,000 feet and 600 miles an hour.

Immediately after takeoff, breakfast was served. Ham and cheese omelets, hash browns, etc. We had breakfast on the airline, but who could pass this up. After a nap on President Hinckley's bed, and time for Brad to help the doctor with his computer, I looked out to see Panguitch lake, then Cedar Breaks, and a turn south over Parowan and Summit, and landing in Cedar City.

As we taxied, we could see the crowd that was formed. What a relief. We simply sat for a moment relishing the event as the door sat open. What a feeling as we emerged the door to greet all the people who were our life. Our children, their spouses, grandchildren were all there. Wow. Grandma Green, Larry Naegle, Kristy Blackburn, brothers and sisters in law, and tons of others. Media were held beyond the fence. Reunion for me and the homecoming for Brad. Truly a reunion.

The car spit and polished and chauffeured by Mike, and the house had also been prepared. Spring yard work done by boys and ward, Balloons, ribbons, signs, but best of all, home, our children all home and together. Only a few weeks until Mike would leave for his Mission to Australia, but today we are all home.

Celebration was in the air, a party was planned to welcome Brad home in true style. The friends invited, the food prepared, the big recliners hauled to the back yard for Brad and I, and the friends came. Young and old, all enjoyed the party.

As a foot note, yes we did venture to Hawaii two weeks later. I had my arm operated on to place a plate in it on Wednesday following arrival. The Monday following we went to the doctor, and left for Hawaii on Tuesday afternoon. It was so good to be away from the attention with just the kids and us.

Six weeks later I broke the plate in the arm and had to start over. It has now been three and a half months since the shooting. Mike has been in the MTC for 7 weeks, and leaves July 24<sup>TM</sup>. Brad has tested

for Portuguese at the BYU. He starts school first of July at SUU. He works for Mountain West repairing computers. I am back to work nearly full time. Brad and I both need to regain nerve damage in our left arms. This will take several more months.

I am grateful for this experience. May seem strange to say, but I have learned much about my faith and the faith of people, service, strength of the church, and my own character. I have greater faith in God, and the power of prayer. I have also witnessed the strength of my children. I am thankful to them, and especially to Wendy. I am grateful to my heavenly father for his intervention. I pledge to serve him all my days.