

From Where We Stand . . .

Improve Farm Meetings

When any area has as many farm meetings as Lancaster County does in a year's time, some are bound to be less than satisfactory.

We are not singling out any particular group or organization for criticism, but we've been concerned in recent weeks over the poor "quality" of content and presentation at several farmer meetings.

It used to be that, with field work out of the way, farmers had a lot of time on their hands over the long winter, and could even afford the luxury of wasting a little of it. This is considerably less true today as farmers have increased the size of poultry and livestock operations, and have otherwise taken some of the seasonality out of their work schedules. The demand on a farmer's time these days is terrific, and it is important to his business success that he make the best use of that time.

Educational meetings sponsored by the extension service, by farm groups, and by private firms are important in helping the farmer keep up to-date in this changing world. But when he adjusts his busy schedule to include a meeting from which he feels he will gain valuable information, and then goes away from that meeting empty-handed, he has, in a sense, been cheated of his most precious commodity — TIME.

We have helped with the planning and presentation of enough meetings to know that it is considerably easier to criticize others than to do the job well oneself. So our point in this editorial is not criticism alone, but a plea to the planners and sponsors of farmer meetings to examine this subject in advance.

First of all, they might ask themselves two questions: "What is the purpose of the proposed meeting?" and "is it a necessary meeting?"

A meeting may have one of several functions — 1) to inform, 2) to entertain, 3) to instruct; or, 4) to socialize. It could conceivably combine any two of these functions, but, by all means, it should make known to the interested public beforehand just what its purpose is. This can generally be accomplished with an appropriate title and a brief description of the meeting's content, circulated in advance. Equally as important, the content of the meeting should stick with the announced theme and

purpose, not merely use the title as a point of departure.

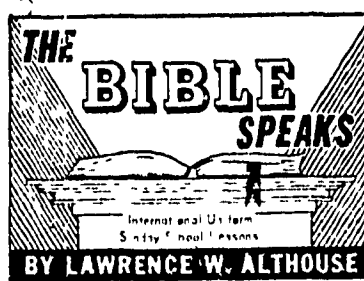
HUMOR — another pet peeve! How many highly-touted speakers have you heard introduced with "Mr. So-and-So will now tell you how to make a million dollars raising tail-less cats for mousers in rocking chair factories", and Mr. So-and-So gets up and runs through a routine of stale jokes pilfered from old Reader's Digest magazines for the next forty-five minutes? And you leave the meeting no closer to knowing how to make the million dollars than when you went in.

Don't misunderstand; we deeply appreciate good humor. It can be used to great advantage by a speaker to illustrate important points, and to lighten an otherwise serious subject. But it should reinforce the subject discussed, not detract from it; also, a speaker has to know his audience to know what brand of humor they will enjoy and what brand will simply offend them.

LENGTH — another common meeting culprit. We're thinking, in this case, of length of speeches and length of total meeting. While there have been many good speakers in the county this past season, we have also had our share of long-winded ones who took an hour or more to deliver 15-minute talks, simply because they hadn't properly organized either their material or themselves.

The main factor accounting for excess meeting length is probably trying to crowd too much into the event. Some organizational annual meetings seem to be guilty of this. Of course, that's strictly the business of that particular organization. Its members are aware of the condition since they generally attend the function each year. The purpose of such a meeting is often social as well as to transact annual business matters. But, even so, we've seen few of these affairs which couldn't have been improved by a bit more careful culling on the part of the organizers.

The general meeting season will soon make way for the rush of spring-time chores, and the farmer will probably forget the good and the bad meetings he attended during the winter. But there will be another season, come next winter, and, hopefully, those who put on farmer educational meetings will continue to strive for improvement in quality, not quantity. Probably the only one who will truly benefit from the upgrading of meetings will be the farmer — but isn't that the whole point, after all?



Little and Much
Lesson for February 26, 1967

Background Scripture: Luke 14:1-17
Devotional Reading: Matthew 13:12-17

Many of us delight ourselves in thinking of all the wonderful things we would do if our circumstances in life were different. If we had some outstanding profession, how hard we would work. If we were rich, how generous we would be. If we had more time, how helpful we would be to others.



It is a covenant frame of mind, for while we occupy ourselves with thoughts of what we would do, we are freed from thinking about what we can do. As Dag Hammarskjöld has put it: "The great commandment is so much easier than the ordinary everyday one — and can all too easily shut our hearts to the latter."

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When Great Task Comes

It is also very deceptive, for if we do not do what we can do now, we are not likely to do well when the great task comes. There is a close relationship between the great and the small tasks. "He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much," said Jesus.

Gilbert Stuart, an English architect, has received recognition for two projects. One of these was a great cathedral. The other was a new telephone booth. Both of them, it is said, bear the marks of true genius. Perhaps we find this difficult to understand. We would expect a man of genius to use his full capacities in designing something so important as a cathedral. But why should he have invested so much talent in the design of something so prosaic as a telephone booth?

Test of Small Tasks

Isn't this what Jesus meant? Faithful discipleship is required in the small tasks as well as in the great ones. If you do second-rate work in the telephone booth-sized jobs, you are not likely to do any differently with those of more importance. "If you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon," asks Jesus, "who will entrust to you the true riches?" (Luke 16:11 RSV) God tests us in the small tasks: if we perform them faithfully, he may entrust to us something greater.

We must also keep in mind that what seems important in our judgment may not be so important in God's scale of values, or vice-versa. So said Jesus: "... what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." The important task of your lifetime, as God sees it, may be the seemingly small task that is before you now, not some imaginary great thing in the future.

God's Competitor

Probably there is no portion of our lives in which this is more true than in our stewardship of God's gifts, particularly of money. We may comfort ourselves with the thought of how charitable we would be if we were wealthy, yet miss completely what we could do with what we already have. Why should God give us more if we manage so poorly what we have?

To many people, the stewardship of money is one of the unimportant areas of Christian discipleship. Yet if we take seriously the teachings of Jesus, it cannot be a small thing to God. The way we handle our money says much about the rest of our discipleship, for money is often one of God's greatest competitors. "You cannot serve God and mammon," he warned.

There are many telephone booth-sized areas in our lives that need cathedral-sized efforts. The great tasks may seem more romantic, more exciting, more rewarding. Yet, as Fenelon put it, "It is, however, only by fidelity in little things that a true and constant love to God can be distinguished from a passing fervor of spirit."

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Go To Church Sunday

Now Is The Time . . .

By Max Smith, Lancaster County Agent

Letter To The Editor . . .

(Note: The following letter was received this week from Ken Martin who went to Honduras, Central America, about a year ago to help establish a credit union under the auspices of the Mennonite Voluntary Service. The son of Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Martin of Denver R1, Ken may be best remembered around the county for his outstanding efforts in the Future Farmers of America, which climaxed with his being named State FFA president in 1964.)

No Snow Shovels In C.A., Martin Reports

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Guanaja, the shaping capital of the Caribbean. Guanaja is one of three islands which comprise the Bay Islands of the northern coast of Honduras. It is located about thirty miles from the mainland.

The island is approximately nine miles long and two and

one-half miles wide. To the south of the island lie fourteen small cays (low island or reef). The town of Guanaja is centered around two of these cays which are about a half mile from the main island. Approximately 2400 of Guanaja's 4,000 people live in this town.

The islanders are of English descent and speak English although they are governed by Spanish Honduras. Most of the people here are bi-lingual. Years ago the islands were under British rule and the older folks still love to talk about the British warships and English pirates that would stop here. Several things have been dug from the island so perhaps I should go treasure hunting. Columbus landed on the north side of the island and it is said that Robert Louis Stevenson got his inspiration from Guanaja to write "Treasure Island".

Life in a sea town sure differs from that in the "Garden Spot". The majority of the houses are built on stilts and stand above the water. Being right at sea level, it gets terribly hot, but we have a sea breeze almost every night. We

get about 170 inches of rainfall a year, the majority between October and February. There is no electricity in town other than that provided by small generators which some merchants have for their stores. Our streets are narrow three to five-foot boardwalks. It's interesting to watch a stranger walk around town at night, or, even moreso a lady in high heels. Very seldom anyone goes overboard, sometimes a dog or an intoxicated man.

Ralph Nafziger and I are serving 23-month terms under Mennonite Voluntary Service, Salunga. We are living on the second floor of a home owned by an old widow whom we quickly started to call "Grammy". On the first floor, the alcaldia (mayor) has his office. I'm not sure if this is an advantage or disadvantage. Our kitchen is equipped with a two burner kerosene stove and kerosene refrigerator. We are quite proud of some of the Honduran dishes we produce.

Our diet sure is different from "Mom's Pennsylvania" (Continued on Page 3)

To Eliminate Cattle Lice

Efficiency of production and gain requires some attention to animal comfort. Animals that are heavily infested with lice are not comfortable and will not make the best use of feed. At this time of the year special attention should be given to certain animals are not loaded with lice. Either sprays, dusts, or rubbing cables may be used to eradicate the pest. Two treatments at 14 to 16 day intervals are required when administering hand treatment.

To Broadcast Legumes

Forage producers who are planning to establish a new stand of alfalfa or clover in existing winter grain by way of the broadcast method should be planning to make this seeding by the first 10 days in March. Research and experience both reveal that early spring seedings are more successful than later attempts in broadcasting. If the broadcast method of hand seeding is to be used then the farmer must wait a few days after the ground has thawed and equipment is available to broadcast wheat.

After a few days after a heavy rain, the soil will be moist and the wheat will be able to consider the broadcast method of seeding with nitrogen. The nitrogen will be available to the wheat.



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