

# The Farm Revolution

You do not have to go beyond the local area to realize how the role of the farmer has been revolutionized. Today the number of persons operating family owned farms here is less than a generation ago but today's Lancaster area farmer is one employing the latest methods and theories — as well as the most modern farm equipment available.

America — the United States — is the most revolutionary nation on earth; and, paradoxically, U. S. citizens who have lived in the midst of revolution all their lives are largely unaware of the fact. All eyes turn toward recent social and racial upheavals and view these as the stuff of revolution while the real revolution has been occurring elsewhere — on our farms.

In a revealing documentary, entitled "The Revolution In American Agriculture," National Geographic magazine has done a magnificent job of presenting in words and pictures the story of a millennium without parallel in human history. In brief, we have reached a millennium in food production — call it revolution or what you will. The physical proportions of what has happened were well summarized in a statement by Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin when he said "Through the decades before the Civil War, the American farmer produced food and fiber enough to feed and clothe himself and three other persons; a century later, when we entered World War II, new machines and techniques had helped inch the figure to himself and 11, today it has leaped to himself and 42. The superabundance from our fields comes from a dwindling number of farmers working fewer and fewer farms."

## Farming Leads Way

National Geographic sent a team of photographers and writers around the country to discover how all this has come about. Their findings, together with the implications for our country and the world, are almost more than the mind can grasp. To begin with, the successful farmer of today operates one of the most sophisticated enterprises ever undertaken by man. The modern farm calls for a wider range of managerial decisions and skills than does the average family-owned factory or business in the city. It is no exaggeration to say that the myriad technological and scientific developments that have so dramatically altered life in the city have really had their ultimate utilization in agriculture.

One crop — tomatoes — explains the mystery of how so few feed so many. A single grower with a \$23,000, 65-ton harvester operated by a driver and 14 women passengers can pick and sort 15 tons of tomatoes an hour.

Eggs are another illustration. Out in California, a single egg factory near Los Angeles shelters two million Leghorn chickens that gobble 250 tons of feed a day. When egg production falls below a certain computer-calculated output, the chickens go into soup or potpies. Still another example described by the Geographic is a vast cattle feedlot near Greeley, Colorado, where 100,000 steers are fattened in a marvel of automation and computers.

Somewhat surprisingly the complexity and size of modern farming operations have not abolished the family farm. Family farming accounts for 64 per cent of total farm marketing and 95 per cent of all farms are family owned. An official of the American Farm Bureau Federation says that, "The big corporation has to pay its farm managers and labor before it can count its profit. But the individual owner pays himself with the difference between the farm's income and expenses; instead of hiring labor, he takes the hours of sweat out of his own hide. And as long as we consumers reward him with enough to provide the standard of living he aspires to, he'll hold his own against the big corporations."

## Controlling Pests

Another section of the Geographic documentary is devoted to the biological and chemical developments that help in the monumental struggle to control pests and insects — an area in which there is wide public misunderstanding. Seventy-five million acres of crops each year are lost to insects, weeds and plant diseases. As far as farm chemicals are concerned, an official of the Agricultural Research Service notes, "It is in the public interest to minimize contamination of our surroundings. But the farmer is not the big offender. Much of the problem is associated with industrialization and urbanization."

The future of agriculture is virtually unlimited. National Geographic paints a breathtaking picture of things to come, describing a time in which there may be agricultural plots several miles long, worked by equipment running on tracks or paved runways. Cattle pens may resemble high-rise apartments in the 21st Century. A modern farmhouse may have a bubble-topped control tower humming with a computer, weather reports and a farm-price ticker tape. Remote-controlled machinery may do much of the work. But, compared with the farming operation of much of the rest of the world, U.S. agriculture already is in the future.

Yes, we are a nation of revolution — the seeds of which have flourished in the soil of individual opportunity and have produced the greatest progress mankind has known.

# There IS is a Difference

Gun control extremists seem to think guns rather than people are the instigators of crime.

If such a theory were followed to its logical conclusion, the list of potential lethal accessories of modern civilization which should be removed from citizen ownership becomes endless — automobiles, bathtubs, kitchen knives, hammers, hatchets — and probably the ancient bow and arrow.

The Virginia State Legislature is consid-

ering a bill to impose separate mandatory prison sentences on persons carrying firearms during commission of crimes. A sponsor of the proposed Virginia law notes, "Only the illegal user of firearms would have anything to fear."

The Virginia proposal has been endorsed by the National Rifle Association. It represents the type of action that should be taken in any measure having to do with firearms control. It covers riots to the extent that rioting and inciting to riot, now a misdemeanor, would become a felony if a firearm is used. It would include carrying pointing or brandishing a firearm "or any object confusingly similar in appearance to a firearm" during a crime, regardless of whether it is a misdemeanor or felony.

The wounding of a victim with a gun during a crime would automatically bring a prison sentence of 10 to 20 years.

The proposed Virginia law recognizes the fundamental fact that most gun control legislation overlooks. There are two kinds of citizens — those who obey the law and those who break it.

Throwing both the criminal and the law-abiding citizen into the same kettle is a travesty of justice.



## NOW IS THE TIME . . .

By Max Smith  
Lancaster County Agent

## To Plow Down Cover Crops

The growth of cover crops has been very fast in recent weeks and most of them have enough growth to turn under. This work should be done before the top growth of the cover crop gets excessive. In some years the weather is very favorable for rapid growth but not suitable for plowing or discing. Applications of a nitrogen fertilizer on the cover crop before plowing will help decompose the green material more rapidly.

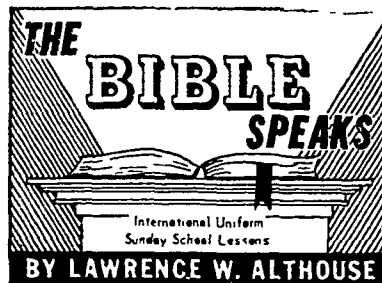
## To Inspect Pastures

The disposal of trash into pasture fields in the rural areas is far too common. I'm sure that all local officials are aware of this serious solid waste disposal practice. Livestock producers

who are planning to turn their animals to pasture for the first time of the season are urged to go over the area carefully and remove all waste materials; some of it may be poisonous or injurious to livestock.

## To Operate Machinery Safely

Weather conditions have delayed many plans for the start of field work for the growing season. When the soil becomes dry enough to work, there will be danger of too much haste and speed with most machinery. This has often been the cause of serious farm accidents. Also, many pieces of machinery, such as the grain drill of corn planters, may not plant accurately at excessive speeds. Farmers are urged to take time to do the work carefully and accurately.



## THE "BREAKS"

Lesson for April 26, 1970

Background Scripture: Acts 6:8 through 8:40; 10:3 through 11:18  
Devotional Reading: Matthew 10:24-33

Clem Labine, the great National League baseball pitcher, has discovered what can be done with adversity: "I busted my index finger on my right hand trying to catch a pass in a semi-pro football game. I got a bad crook in my finger. I found out afterwards that it helped my curve ball and sinker."



He turned an injury into an asset, something Christians have been doing for over 1,900 years. Rev. Althouse: From the very beginning of the church it has been evident that the important thing is not so much in getting the "breaks of the game," but in making the breaks work for you instead of against you.

This is illustrated for us in Acts 8, the story of the first persecution of the Church. It broke out with great violence the same day that Stephen was martyred. His death was probably the spark that ignited it. Saul and his co-workers seemed to operate on the principle: when in doubt, use violence. The religious authorities did not know what to do with the followers of Jesus. They had tried imprisonment, threats, intimidation—but, none of this had kept the disciples from their witness. Finally, the authorities resorted to violence, just as they had done with Jesus.

The world has not changed much, has it? Many people still seem to operate on that principle: when in doubt, use violence. Most wars begin because men are committed to this idea. Racial and economic strife are other consequences. Yet, again and again, history has demonstrated that violence not only fails to achieve its objectives, but often brings the very opposite result.

What God can use: On the day of his Ascension, Jesus had said to his disciples:

"... you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (1:8). Up to the time of the persecution, however, His followers had stayed in Jerusalem, even after Pentecost. What was it, then, that would move them out into Judea, Samaria, and beyond? The answer: persecution!

The disciples were soon to learn two things from their experience. First, they learned that the will of God cannot be defeated by the violent opposition of men. Persecution would not be able to stop the Church just as it had been unable to stop Jesus. God can use even the evil intentions of men to fulfill his purposes for the Church and the Kingdom.

Secondly, they learned that when they were truly open to God's power and purpose, he was able to carry them further than they otherwise would have been willing to go. Specifically, in this case, it meant carrying the gospel into Samaria, something that was hardly an attractive prospect for Jewish Christians. The reason, of course, was the ancient bitterness between Jews and Samaritans.

The feeling between these two peoples was so intense that Jewish travelers from Galilee made a long detour to avoid passing through Samaria. The original bitterness between them can be traced to actual historical facts, but sheer prejudice kept the wounds from healing.

## The opportunities in adversity

The persecution that overtook the church did not seem like a blessing to the early disciples. Yet, in time, they were probably able to look back and realize that God had taken the violence of sinful men and managed to bring a blessing from it. The persecution was a "bad break," but God taught the Church how to make a "bad break" work for the Kingdom instead of against it.

He can teach us that lesson too, if we let him.

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