

Welfare Reform

Three years ago, President Nixon offered a program of welfare reform intended to relieve the states of part of the welfare burden. His program has been stalled in Congress. Consequently, states seeing the hope of federal assistance dwindling while welfare rolls continued to soar have been forced to take action on their own. Some of the measures they have adopted have been drastic—and not altogether successful.

Lois Wille of the Chicago Daily News Service has devoted a special feature to the attempt of the states to bring welfare under control. She tells how, "In California, prosecuting attorneys have started a drive to track down fathers of children of welfare rolls—and garnish their wages." She notes the widely publicized New York requirement that employable welfare recipients must pick up their checks at state employment offices and accept any available jobs.

"In Pennsylvania", she says, "teams of investigators called 'Project Sweep' are methodically working their way through welfare records, visiting families and checking Social Security numbers to find cheaters. In Illinois, 4,000 welfare recipients are moving into public service jobs—and records of hospitalized recipients are being scrutinized to determine if there are any unnecessary charges."

These are merely samples of countless state projects to hold the line on welfare costs. Currently, some 14.6 million persons in the United States are public aid recipients—twice the number of 1962. Fourteen billion dollars a year, mostly state and local tax money, is going for welfare.

Ms. Wille points out that some of the state "reform" measures produce either undesirable results or merely shift the cost to taxpayers from welfare to another form of public aid. New Jersey, for example, in a desperate move to counter a 150 percent rise in welfare rolls over a five-year period, stopped payments to all families with an unemployed father in the home.

A likely result of this, Ms. Wille feels, is that the unemployed father will disappear so his family can eat. Perhaps the home is broken up permanently, and another costly

social problem has been created in addition to welfare. On the other hand, the California drive to find absent fathers and garnish their wages, she writes, "... seems to have merit."

One problem of state welfare "reform" moves is that they often cost more to administer than they save in welfare dollars. The Pennsylvania project employed about 50 investigators. In the end, they found remarkably few ineligible welfare recipients—about 3.8 per cent.

It takes hundreds of welfare investigators in New York to follow up the New York plan of forcing welfare claimants to pick up checks at state employment offices. A thousand or so malingerers are lopped off the welfare rolls every month, but a New York welfare authority says, "They would have been weeded out anyway in our regular reviews."

Further complicating the welfare mess are Washington directives that frequently conflict. Connecticut as an illustration must, according to the law, follow a variable system of welfare payments based on estimates of clothes, furniture, special foods, transportation, school supplies, rent and other essentials a family needs. Following such a system, comments Ms. Wille, "... means chaos for caseworkers and inequality for welfare families."

Connecticut has endeavored to adopt a simplified "flat grant", but welfare officials in Washington have not approved it. Yet, a flat grant system has been adopted in Massachusetts and is working smoothly. Why was Massachusetts able to adopt a more workable welfare system while Connecticut has been prohibited from doing so?

Says Ms. Wille, "That is one of the many mysteries and frustrations of a welfare system that operates 50 different ways in 50 different states—subject to directives from Washington that are not always consistent or reasonable."

Whether the Administration's welfare reforms are accepted or whether other measures are devised to bring welfare under control, no doubt remains in anyone's mind a solution must be found before the states and the nation are dragged into bankruptcy.

Grassroots Opinions

PORT GIBSON, MISS., REVEILLE: "If welfare regulations are as some people say, there is something wrong with the system. Several employers of labor say some of their workmen will not be able to work certain days, as their food stamps may be cut off. In other words, as we understand it, they are allowed to work so many hours, but after those hours are up and they continue to work, their stamps will be reduced, so they won't work. If this is true, it seems to us some changes certainly should be made."

GREEN FOREST, ARK, TRIBUNE: "It is often difficult to maintain faith. Yet, in today's fast-moving world, faith in our moral principles, in the future of our country, in the goodness within our fellowmen, and in ourselves, is a most vital character asset. For peace of mind, happiness and an understanding of life and what is to be accomplished with it, faith seems to be a key. If you have none, or very little, do something about it."

WINSTED, CONN, CITIZEN: "We wonder if the people responsible for the many bomb scares we hear of these days fully realize the seriousness of the act. Bomb scares can be classified as a Class A misdemeanor and a person apprehended on such a charge could wind up in jail for a period not to exceed one year. What a howl there would be from some areas if some young person was so sentenced, but when one considers the overall impact, of such

incidents, maybe one or two such terms might provide a solution to a growing nuisance."

BOONE, N. C., WATAUGA DEMOCRAT: "Sixteen months ago, a Sacramento, California businessman named William Bailey started a new newspaper called 'The Good News Paper,' which dealt only with happy tidings. His circulation increased 11,000 by listing only stocks that went up, by banning ads for cigarettes and sex movies and by using story leads such as—'In the US last year, 196,459,483 citizens did not commit a crime.' But the paper fell into debt and had to discontinue publication. Even to the end, Bailey stood by his policy of good news. He never printed the bad news of his failure in 'The Good News Paper.'"

BASTROP, LA. ENTERPRISE: "Then we have Congress considering a two dollar minimum wage, from the present \$1.60. If this passes, and it probably will, it will mean more inflation, more costs. And it probably will mean more unemployment. Don't think that the \$2 will apply only to the lowest paid employees. As you know if you have an employe now making two dollars an hour and someone below him making \$1.60, you will have to raise the two dollar an hour man to say \$2.50 and all the way up the line. This minimum wage law would really turn on inflation with a bang."

NOW IS THE TIME . . .

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To Consider Summer Liming

It has been said that liming can be done whenever the soil is solid enough to support the spreading truck. However, there are good advantages to applying lime at this summer season. Doing the job now beats both the usual fall and spring rush periods. It gives lime the needed time to react and neutralize acid soil.

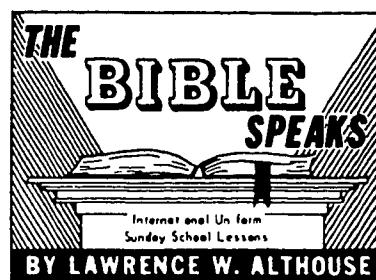
This summer it is more important than ever to plan ahead in the use of lime. Rains last spring caused a lot of good liming intentions to run afoul of the weather. Also, all those extra inches of rainfall to date no doubt leached the soil, to further increase the need for lime.

Right after harvest provides an opportunity to get lime supplies - following the harvest of small grain, hay, corn, silage or whatever.

To Control Nutsedge

Nutsedge, commonly known as nutgrass, has been observed in some fields and along the edges and ends of the same. The grassy weed is now flowering. Soon seed heads will be maturing. However, an even more serious reproduction occurs underground where little nutlets or small tubers form. It is from these soil sources that most of the new infestations occur each year.

Failure to control nutsedge foliage from early August to frost will result in heavy nutlet formation; more of the weeds will grow the next year. Since the nutlets form after the long days of summer, control of the nutsedge foliage now will materially reduce future infestations.



A FAMILY FAITH

Lesson for August 13, 1972

Background Scripture Deuteronomy 6:1-9
Psalms 78:1-8, 2 Timothy 1:3-7
Devotional Reading Psalms 78:1-8

In American church life today there is nothing more deceptive than the popular images of "Christian family life" appearing on bulletin covers and in denominational periodicals are those photographs of clean-cut, well-scrubbed, middle class mothers and fathers,



Rev. Althouse

boys and girls, sitting either around an easy chair in a spotless living room while father reads the Bible to a rapt audience, or in the "family pew" in their church, each member of the family intently involved in the sermon or ritual.

Pictures that lie!

These images seldom inspire anyone, let alone whole families, because either people feel guilty in not measuring up to those pleasant images or they reject them as being untrue. Even in the "best of families" — whatever they may be — families are not like those images. Many children—perhaps most—do not listen intently as father reads the Bible; most families seldom look like that on a Sunday morning; mother is not always smiling, and father is not always so regal (in

fields which will allow it, use tillage, plowing, mowing or apply a contact herbicide to gain better control of this weed.

To Note Grazing Habits

Each summer there is usually a hot, dry period when the normal pasture production drops-off. Such a period is occurring now. At this time grazing livestock will start looking for greener pastures. This means they seek out wild plants along fence rows, weedy areas of the pasture and similar places. Here the animals can eat harmful or perhaps poisonous weeds; even woody plants are browsed.

An inspection of the pasture and bordering areas will reveal the presence of possible troublesome plants. Also, a few bales of hay taken to the pasture once or twice a week will help. Animals seek a variation in their diets. Wild plants may be consumed - not because they are palatable but because the animals are bored with the same day-to-day diet.

To Beware of Johnsongrass

No weed at present carries a bigger potential threat to county farm fields than does Johnsongrass. Here is a weed which is showing up in fields more each year. The sad fact is that this vicious plant often escapes recognition until it is firmly established in a field. Where continuous corn is grown the weed is especially apt to thrive.

Johnsongrass looks very much like Sudangrass. The stems, leaves and seed heads closely resemble Sudan. However, Johnsongrass has extensive underground root-stocks — short, thick, pinkish-red scaly rhizomes. It is thus a true perennial in growth habit.

fact, there are times when mother is a bit grouchy and father occasionally sleeps during the sermon).

Many families have also found that those oft-suggested family rituals—grace at meals, family Bible reading, and bedtime prayers—very often do not quite "come off" and do not seem to really affect the family life that much. For this reason, many families have quietly dropped the rituals and "family religion" for many has come to mean the weekly Sunday morning battle to get the kids off to Sunday school and church—a battle in which many parents soon surrender after token opposition.

Beyond the rituals

The problem is not with the rituals of family religion—empty as they may seem—but with our tendency to try to substitute them for a vital family faith. The rituals all tend to be empty because the rest of our lives—family life especially—are devoid of spiritual content. It matters little how fanatical we are about always "saying grace" so long as children sense that their parents don't really depend upon God's providence and don't really feel all that thankful.

If God is not a constant living presence in the home, no rituals can make him come alive there. The writer of Deuteronomy seems to know this for he speaks, not of occasional acknowledgments of God, but the continual remembrance of his presence at all places and at all hours: "... and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (6:7). That's where we find a real family faith.