

Feeding the World

The people of the United States have had quite a number of rude shocks during the past year as regards the cost of some of our basic necessities of life, which have traditionally been very cheap in this country. Take-home pay for most Americans has been high relative to amounts paid for such things as food, electric power, gasoline, heating, natural gas and housing. Burgeoning federal deficits and other forces have, for the past generation, kept the ball of inflation rolling. But most people have, up till now, been able to keep pretty well ahead of it. Much of the average family's income has gone for the luxuries of life and recreation—color television sets, sporting equipment, campers, boats and other items contributing to the fullness and enjoyment of life. The necessities were pretty much taken for granted by most people.

Suddenly, this picture has changed. Prices of the things we can't get along without have risen sharply and, in some cases, much more rapidly than the general level of inflation. A classic example is food. During the summer months, price controls and freezes proved effective in only one respect. They quickly contributed to a disruption of agricultural production and food distribution. For the first time since the darkest days of World War II, 30 years ago, there were widespread predictions of food scarcity and rationing in this country, which has traditionally been a land of food surpluses capable of meeting food supply emergencies around the world. U.S. Department of Agriculture and food industry spokesmen made it clear that unless price ceilings and freezes were removed in time to permit retail sale of meats and processed foods at a price sufficient to cover the cost of buying agricultural products, processing and distributing them, there would be severe food shortages. Shortages were predicted not only of beef, which suffered the longest price freeze of all, but of more mundane items such as canned fruits and vegetables.

Out of this experience has come a better understanding of the capacity of U.S. agriculture to produce, as well as the outlook for the supply and cost of food in the United States. From the farmers' standpoint, the future looks promising. Farm prices are good. Worldwide demand for grain is high and, by all accounts, will stay that way. Farmers selling wheat a few years ago at a dollar a bushel are now getting \$3 and \$4. It is the same kind of story for corn and soybeans. As a result, the incentive to produce is there. There have been record harvests of all kinds of crops. Increased marketing of cattle will reduce pressure on alternative meat

supplies such as pork and chicken, but prices will stay strong. U.S. farmers will close the year of 1973, according to U.S. News & World Report, with a "... gross income, before expenses, of \$86 billion. That is an increase of \$17 billion over 1972." Expenses, it is reported, will be up sharply too by some \$11 billion, but still, farmers are making more money. Many are paying off debts and are encouraged to buy new equipment and supplies to better use their land and increase their production.

"Time" magazine reports that the relaxation of federal acreage controls designed to reduce production will result by next year in some 60 million acres out of 330 million being put back into use. This ends the policy, enforced since the '30's, designed to deliberately limit output in order to hold prices up and give the American farmer a living wage. Now, as "Time" magazine puts it, the U.S. farmer has a "Golden Opportunity." There is "... little reason to doubt that over the long run, the world market will absorb as much as he can grow. The Department of Agriculture estimates that the tonnage of U.S. crop exports will climb about 60 percent by 1985."

The U.S., as a major farming nation, will have to help supply food not only to the more affluent populations who are eating better in the countries of Western Europe and in Japan but also to the developing nations around the world in Africa, South America and the Far East. These nations--which suffer from the highest birth rate--for the most part have not yet learned to grow enough food to feed themselves.

It is little wonder that the past year has been upsetting in the local supermarket. U.S. agriculture has been in the midst of making an historic turnaround from fear of overproduction and starvation prices to a new condition of reliance on the free market, bolstered by world food demand. Farming can, in this new era, be a profitable business and maximum production is the key to success. In this new agricultural world, the American consumer may pay a little more for food, but it is still likely to be a bargain in the overall cost of living.

As "Time" magazine sums it up, "Having given up the unrealistic goal of policing the world, the U.S. can turn with enthusiasm to the more rewarding job of trying to feed it." In doing this, productive U.S. agriculture will help pay for the increasing quantities of petroleum and other raw materials which must be imported. Most importantly, it will make an inestimable contribution to the well-being of millions of people in other nations and to the peace and stability of the world for generations to come.

Grassroots Opinion

BLANCHESTER, OHIO, STAR-REPUBLICAN: "Those who maintain that punishment is no deterrent to crime might well observe a magical performance of law enforcement experienced in New York City. The angry blowing and blasting by horn-happy drivers, it is reported, has disappeared. Gone are the high decibels that polluted the air. Over the entire city of 365 square miles and 8 million souls there now abides the blessing of quietness. Why? Because the power that be cracked down with a fine of \$25 for every unnecessary foot!"

NEW LONDON, IOWA, JOURNAL: "An oldtimer said the other day the number of intellectuals in this country is really going down--now that the draft has been called off. And isn't it funny--how already the colleges are worrying about hard times?"

LONDON, KY., SENTINEL-ECHO: "There are borrowers who have the idea that all loans run for life. Most of us would be better off if we worked less, made less, and spent less. The simple life, praised in prose and verse, isn't so simple in this day and time."

BLAIR, NEBR., PILOT-TRIBUNE: "American taxpayers should begin to take note of the elected state and federal officials who sanction the continued expansion of government programs and government spending. They should analyze every legislative and Congressional vote carefully to determine whether the price is worth the taxes which will be required and whether the project is a genuine benefit to the state and nation or merely a vote getting maneuver at the expense of the taxpayers."

NOW IS THE TIME . . .

Max Smith
County Agr. Agent
Telephone 394-6851



To Do Some Tax Planning

By now farmers should have an accurate estimate of their taxable income for 1973. If that income is substantially higher or lower than expected, there can be an advantage to making some last minute adjustments. Any steps taken to adjust the 1973 income must be done before the end of this year.

Suppose your 1973 income is above normal. Such a situation can be evened out a bit by putting off sales of crops and animals; by paying all current farm business bills before January 1; by buying ahead for next year's feed, seed, fertilizer or similar supplies; by purchasing things like paint, small shop tools, building repairs and fencing but are deductible only in the year of purchase. There are still other ways -- all legal -- to reduce the tax bite.

Of course, if your income falls below expectation, follow the reverse procedure. Sell instead of buying and paying off.

Do Some Fall Plowing

The Fall season this time around was an unusually good one, weatherwise, to get most field work completed ahead of schedule. This means that consideration can be given to doing more Fall plowing than usual. The soil is presently in good working tilth to plow.

Turning the furrows in the Fall has several advantages. The practice aids in pest control, especially such insects in corn stubble fields as the corn borer. The plowed soil warms and dries-

out more rapidly in the Spring permitting earlier sowing and planting. Some of the Spring rush work is eliminated. Application of lime and fertilizer can be done; these will mix well by plowing under.

Fields where wind and water erosion are problems to contend with should not be plowed now.

To Update Partnership Agreement

Partnership agreements like trucks, tractors and other farm machinery, must be checked regularly, occasionally revised if they are to operate in a satisfying manner.

Once a farm partnership is established the agreement should be checked annually. First, to see how well each of the partners are meeting their partnership obligations. Second, to carefully evaluate the agreement to determine if it is doing its intended job.

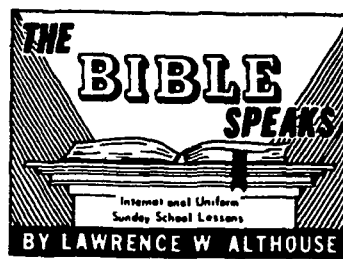
Farming these days is a rapidly changing business. Do not be surprised if the agreement set up only a couple of years ago now is inadequate to meet today's needs.

Where changes ought to be made make plans to do this before 1974 rolls around.

Editor's Quote Book

"The secret of the man who is universally interesting is that he is universally interested."

—William Dean Howells



TO OVERCOME

Lesson for November 11, 1973

Background Scripture: Romans 12:14 through 13:4
Devotional Reading: Romans 13:8-14

Sometimes the teachings of Jesus in regard to responding to evil are labeled "non-resistance." At first glance it might seem that this is what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is all about. Paul's interpretation of Christ's teaching in Romans 12 is often cited as an example: "Repay no one evil for evil ... Beloved never avenge yourselves."

Those admonitions from the great Apostle are reminiscent of similar teachings by the Master: "turning the other cheek," going a "second mile," etc.

The failure of retaliation

It has often seemed that Jesus and Paul were counseling weakness and capitulation in the face of tormentors and adversaries. By taking away the usual option of retaliation, there seems to be little left to the follower of Jesus Christ but defeat and surrender. It is assumed by many people that only the threat of retaliation can ever adequately control people who would otherwise do us harm. Despite almost two thousand years of Christianity this opinion still seems to prevail in the world today.

It is truly amazing, however, that this point of view should still prevail among so many people --

including Christians -- because history has proven it in error so many, many times. Although the threat of retaliation may deter some people in some situations, it is generally ineffective with most people. Many people commit acts of violence and aggression without any planning or forethought. They are too driven by passion to stop and count the consequences. Many nations have marched off to war without giving any thought to the dangers of retaliation.

The vicious cycle

In fact, instead of deterring violence, retaliation often causes it when people or nations become locked into a deadly cycle of paying back each other. The tragic story of "Romeo and Juliet" is the classic dramatization of that fact. In the feud between the Capulets and Montagues the accounts were never settled, never balanced. One act of retaliation seemed to spawn another. Retaliation has long been demonstrated to be an ineffective way of reducing conflict.

But the Christian approach as outlined by Jesus and Paul is not negative, not a matter of what you don't do when you meet hostility. It is a most active, positive response. New Testament scholar Clarence Tucker Craig once said, "The principle which he (Jesus) had laid down was not one of non-resistance to evil. It would be truer to say that his whole life consisted in one long resistance to evil" (The Beginning of Christianity, Abingdon). It is not a matter of not resisting evil, but how.

The answer: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

(Based on outlines copyrighted by the Division of Christian Education, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Released by Community Press Service.)