

# Two Years Since Agnes

by Melissa Piper,  
Associate Editor

This week will mark the two year anniversary of the Flood of 1972 or as it was known in the Wyoming Valley, near my home, the "Summer of Agnes".

Many stories have been written about the conditions of the towns and cities that were badly hit by Agnes; however, many forget that a large percentage of crops throughout Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland and Virginia were either ruined or hurt by the raging water and thick mud.

Fortunately, our farm in Columbia County escaped serious damage but many others lost sizeable crops of corn and grain.

Rain had been falling steadily for most of May that year and by early June the ground had been soaked to capacity. Flooding might have occurred as the melting snow of the mountain regions blended into the streams but when the heavy rains of June began, flooding seemed a more real danger.

Beginning at midnight on Friday, June 23, the rain came down in torrents causing the already swollen streams to overflow their banks and by five the next morning, Fishing Creek in Columbia county had been transformed from a swollen creek to a raging giant.

Further up north in the Wyoming Valley, the mighty Susquehanna River had exploded over its high banks and had invaded the city of Wilkes-Barre and the surrounding country side. Tearing houses, commercial buildings, cars and bridges to pieces without thought of preference.



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Friday and Saturday for most people involved in the diaster, was only a blur of time, remembered only as evacuations, wading through waist high water and living as refugees in shelters.

For the farm families, it meant moving machinery and animals to higher areas and fighting to keep water and mud from taking over their buildings and fields.

By Sunday, June 25, most of the water had miraculously receded and the grass, trees, fields and buildings that had been covered by water were left with a brown coat of dust.

As I walked over our farm, I remember how quiet the world seemed as if it were resting from the hardship it had endured. Much of the corn which had only begun to show itself because of heavy rains, had been washed away from the fields and replaced with litter and mud.

The fields of grain had pools of water in their center

and the clover which had been damp for so long was downed and heavy with moisture.

The farmers closer to the flood ravaged cities in the Wyoming Valley were more dismayed however for much of their crops were totally destroyed and worse yet some of their animals had been lost or drowned.

Within the next week, volunteers from all over the country streamed into our area to help in the clean up. I was especially touched by the energetic and tireless help of those families of the plain sects from this area. They devoted themselves to helping wherever it was needed without regard to the religion or race of the people in need.

Two years have passed since Agnes hit our state and yet the effects of it have lingered on. Many families in the Wilkes-Barre area still live in emergency housing. Farms are still being repaired and animals replaced.

Measures are now being discussed to limit zoning on flood plains and the Red Cross had announced that a bill to make emergency funds available without a presidential declaration of emergency has been signed into law.

Hopefully, Pennsylvania will never have to experience another disaster for it changes so drastically our way of life and thinking. If however we are subject to another emergency I think it wise to take on the attitude that the volunteers from this area demonstrated - to help those in need with an honest concern and love for all people.

## "Grassroots Opinion"

SCOTTSVILLE, KY., ALLEN COUNTY NEWS: "Deficit spending is peculiar to governments. No businessman would or could continue to operate his business by pursuing a policy of more outgo than income. Yet governments persist in it, to include small municipalities. Fiscal responsibility is one thing that we think everyone should expect of their civil servants, and by that we mean also the elected officials who take an oath that we think includes such a requirement. It is helpful, perhaps, to turn the rascals out but if they have been in office too long, the harmful effects are usually irreversible. The answer: Look closer at your candidates' qualifications, encourage better candidates to run by not only pledging but giving your full support, and then work with them and know what they are doing while in office. You must either protect yourself or pay attention to those who are trying to help."

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NEW BERN, N. C., SUN-JOURNAL: "Beware of all kinds of frauds during the current gasoline crisis! ... (In one city), a man dressed in work clothes, went down a line of cars collecting money for gasoline and giving receipts. Telling the customers he was a station employe the culprit

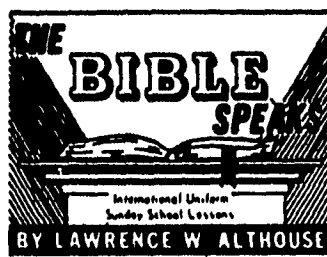
got about \$150 -- and vanished. He was not associated with the service station in any way. So, take heed, be sure you know who you are dealing with. You could get stuck."

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ANTIGO, WISC., JOURNAL: "There are sharp differences between the approaches of congressmen and legislators generally to economic issues. One type is much more disposed to place the blame than it is to develop solutions, and since spotting someone to blame has broad appeal among the voters it can be good politics until the time comes that workable solutions are needed. That calls for constructive efforts, the sifting of facts and judgment based upon them. Those who can see nothing but conspiracy behind every economic evil eventually are recognized as politicians first and statesmen -- not at all."

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CHASKA, MINN., VALLEY HERALD: "I'm like so many Americans, I hate to see the millions and millions of dollars being spent by congress for guns and tanks and ships and other war-making equipment but it's pretty evident if we don't have a giant capacity along those lines we'll be a part of a Chinese or Russian five-year plan sometime in the future."



## THE DEEP END

Lesson for June 23, 1974.

Devotional Reading: Psalms 13.

Background Scripture: 2 Thessalonians

Devotional Reading: Titus 2:11-14.

When we speak of someone "going off the deep end," we mean that they have gone beyond reasonable limits in some particular direction, they have lost their perspective and become fanatical.

This, of course, can happen in any area of life, but it is particularly true of men's religions. There are always religious fanatics and this fanaticism always constitutes a threat to religion because it tends to distort it.

"The forest for the trees"

Fanaticism is like looking at a whole forest and seeing only one tree or group of trees. So, religious fanaticism is focusing on one aspect of religion—usually a valid aspect—and blowing it out of proportion. When this happens, the fanatic cannot see, as the old saying goes, "the forest for the trees."

This was the problem to which Paul had to address himself when he wrote to the church at Thessalonica. The Thessalonians had become fanatics on the subject of Christ's Second Coming. For them, every aspect of Christianity was seen only in the shadow of this one concern. Both their church lives and their daily lives were focused on this belief.

Paul admonished them, not to forget the Second Coming, but to put it back into perspective and stop ignoring the other facet of the gospel. Religious fanaticism always distorts the importance of one part of the truth at the expense of the rest of it.

Secondly, the problem at Thessalonica was not just that people's beliefs were distorted, but that their lives were too. Because they were hung-up on the question of Christ's immanent return, they had decided to stop working and leading productive lives. Thus, Paul had to warn them against "any brother who is living in idleness..." Wrong belief may be self-serving

Paul realized that fanaticism is not just a matter of wrong belief, but may be a means of satisfying some self-serving tendency. Perhaps one of the reasons that the Thessalonians were so attracted to this fanaticism is that it allowed them to be lazy and dependent upon others. It was so serious that Paul had to demand: "If any one will not work, let him not eat" (3:10)!

Fanaticism usually meets self-serving needs and its effect is not just that people hold erroneous or distorted beliefs, but that they live distorted lives. This distortion is usually backed up by a misguided intensity. Philosopher George Santayana defines a fanatic as "one who, having lost sight of his aim, redoubles his effort."

Paul was also concerned

# NOW IS THE TIME...

Max Smith  
County Agr. Agent  
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## To Enroll In Corn Contest

The five-acre corn growing contest is again being sponsored by our Extension Service and the Pennsylvania Master Corn Growers Association. Growers must fill out an entry form and return it to the Extension Office by July 1. The contest requires five acres of one kind of corn, either one field or in counter strips, and any farmer or tenant farmer in Pennsylvania is eligible. Details are available on the entry form.

## To Check Management

Beef and hog producers are in a bind because of the high cost of grains and the low market price of their animals. The high price of feed grains makes it essential to check all feeding practices and try to get cheaper grains. The wasting of feed at the feeder or hopper is one place to start; some animals are throwing out too much high-priced feed. Rats and mice will destroy valuable grains if allowed to multiply. Limited feeding of grains, rather than self-feeding, could give cheaper grains. The use of silage in the ration will usually cheapen grains. Plenty of shade, fresh air, and fresh water are all important to economical grains. With minus margins efficiency becomes very important.

## To Introduce New Grains Slowly

The winter barley crop is now be harvested and some producers may want to start feeding. Due to the danger of digestive disorders feeders are urged to permit the grain to stand for several weeks and then introduce the new grain into the ration slowly (10 to 20 per cent at first). After the grains have gone through a curing period (sweat), there should be less danger of increasing the amount in the ration. Cases of scouring and bloating have occurred when too much of the new grains were fed to cattle.

## To Renovate Strawberry Patch

If the old strawberry plants are to be retained for another season, it is suggested that the rows be renovated in order to get a better crop next year. However, it is a fact that most plants will not bear as well the second or third year. During July or early August the tops of the old plants should be mowed off (set mower high enough to avoid injury to the crowns) and the rows should be narrowed to about 12 to 15 inches. Applications of nitrogen or a complete fertilizer will encourage new growth and aid the forming of more fruit buds this fall. Irrigation of at least one inch of water per week (in dry weather) will create ideal conditions for a bumper crop of strawberries next spring.

# Farm Calendar

Monday, June 24  
Fulton Grange Youth Night  
Thursday, June 27  
Swine Field Day, Sponsored by the Pa. Pork Producers Council and the Pennsylvania State

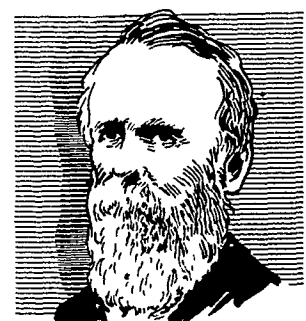
University at Penn State.  
Grain Meeting, at the Sheraton Conestoga Motor Inn, Lancaster, sponsored by Penn Ag at 6:30 p.m.

## from HISTORY'S SCRAPBOOK

DATES AND EVENTS FROM YESTERYEARS

The United States Constitution went into effect on June 21, 1788.  
Germany invaded Russia on June 22, 1941.  
The Civil Aeronautics Authority was created by Congress on June 23, 1938.  
The first mayor of New York City took office on June 24, 1665.  
"Custer's Last Stand" took place on June 25, 1876.  
President Tyler was secretly married in New York City on June 26, 1844.  
A depression began on June 27, 1893, as prices collapsed on the stock market.

## American Viewpoints



He serves his party best  
who serves his country best.  
—Rutherford B. Hayes

with the bad example some of the Thessalonians were setting and he reminded them of his own example when he had been with them (3:7). The problem with "going off the deep end," he knew, is that the fanatic hurts both himself and, by his bad example, others too. (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.)