

Uncle Sam is no farmer or banker

In the past, the U.S. has come close to neglecting the agricultural needs of friendly nations in order to muffle the rattle of sabres in Moscow, Hanoi, and Peking. While the American farmer has bent over backwards to produce, the U.S. government has gone to great lengths to practically give the merchandise away to nations which have threatened to bury us.

Next year some new farm policies are scheduled to be forged in Washington, and hopefully legislators will have learned from mistakes of the past.

Uncle Sam is neither a farmer or a banker because of the way he handles his money. Farmer Brown doesn't throw away his cash, and when he borrows money he works hard to pay it back. Similarly, no banker knowingly gives credit to someone whom he knows has a terrible credit rating.

Ironically, our internal business dealings are competitive, but we - as a nation - have sometimes ignored the principle of free enterprise in dealing with foreign countries - especially the Soviet Union. Labor unions have to a large extent made American industry uncompetitive on the world market. If you need proof, just check how many of the goods in your home were made abroad. Industry has in recent years been unable to keep our foreign trade in balance. We're no longer competitive.

But the American farmer has for the past five years or so taken up the slack. Farmers have lifted the trade figures out of the red and colored them black again. Trade is balanced. (Although in recent months it's been slipping again.) Yet, how much of a thank-you has American agriculture received for paying the bills most of the rest of the country is responsible for?

But farmers aren't the only ones who have taken a licking in previous years due to disastrous export policies. Remember the "Great Grain Robbery" of 1972? Uncle Sam says that the American government paid 40 cents on every bushel of wheat sold to Russia in order to make the deal more attractive to the USSR. More accurately, the American people paid those 40 cents on every bushel through their taxes.

While that in itself was an unjustified blunder, the effects of that "business transaction" which we loosely call a grain deal, had much more serious consequences than subsidies which totalled to over \$300 million.

Remember the chicks which poultrymen drowned because all the cheap wheat went to the communists while the precious little left at home doubled in price? And how about the slaughtered calves because dairymen were faced with a seven per cent increase in profits compared to a 34.4 per cent rise in feed costs (not including hay prices which increased by more than 60 per cent).

Agricultural trade policies have been such during some recent years that livestock producers were forced to compete for American grain with the rest of the world in an open market. Then, when they turned around to sell their products, they've had to compete with foreign subsidized cheese and meat which oftentimes does not meet the same quality standards as the locally

produced stuff and almost always is less expensive due to subsidies. So the situation has left these farmers holding a candle which was burning on both ends. Fortunately, some of this has disappeared during the past

consideration for 1976 bills owed to the West, the figure reads around \$35 billion. If that's not staggering enough, then please note that the communists in Russia have ripped the U.S. off for \$263 billion since they

Banker Uncle Sam has gone along with the trickery too, because Soviet trade and debts are rising very significantly.

The Soviet Union, has been remarkably shrewd. That's putting it mildly. Actually they've been downright cruel.

The United States, through a mixture of characteristic generosity and shameful miscalculations (if indeed these were miscalculations, rather than deliberate blunders) sold wheat and corn to the Soviet Union at bargain prices. That was especially true in 1972, and it's still true to a degree today. The communists then turned around and sold equal amounts of grain and corn to other needy nations at prices which were above the world market costs. They reaped an unfair - but yet very tangible profit. By their own admission, the Russians gained \$125 million on such deals in 1974. They exported nearly an equal amount to their captured nations as what they practically stole from the West.

This last point should be of interest to Americans too - the fact that Russia sold agricultural commodities to captured nations. They've maintained a tight grip on Eastern Europe and force these countries to do most of their trading with Moscow. In other words, East Germany and Hungary, for example, have to rely on Russia to get most of the imported goods they want, even though they could theoretically get them much cheaper from the West.

The question comes up - if Uncle Sam is an All-American businessman who's out to do all he can for farmers and bankers, then why doesn't he tell the Kremlin to fly a kite and proceed to trade with the Eastern bloc countries directly. Those nations would be able to buy their grain at less cost, and American farmers could get more for it. Makes sense to me. Furthermore, many foreign nations who are friendly to the U.S. were vocally disappointed over their having to pay more for less, because Uncle Sam allowed his grain bins to be robbed by the Soviet Union. Other nations were left holding an empty bag or one filled with grain and sand. And many U.S. farmers were just plain stunned.

A final point in all this has nothing to do with dollars and cents. It has to do with humanitarianism.

I've heard of East German farmers setting their grain fields on fire just before harvest in order to create shortages and government instability. The Poles have voiced their discontent on numerous occasions. Many have died for the cause of freedom or quest for free enterprise. By continuously supplying the communists with goods and technology, the United States has enabled that wicked system to sustain itself. The simple fact that communist nations have to rely on the United States for assistance should be proof enough that their system isn't anywhere near as efficient and productive as the one we have - free enterprise.

And even though he isn't a farmer or banker, that's something very special and important which we can all thank Uncle Sam for.

More thoughts and facts on this subject will appear on this page next week.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

BY DIETER KRIEG, EDITOR

two years, but Uncle Sam is still neither a farmer nor banker.

A major reason Uncle Sam is not a banker is because he has been lending money to nations which have a very poor record of remembering to pay their debts. The most notorious of these is the Soviet Union - the world's trouble maker - which has ignored practically all of its foreign debts for the past 60 years. So far - just for 1976 - the Soviet Union has arranged credit terms in the West which eclipse the \$15 billion mark. And that doesn't count direct government to government loans. When the entire Soviet bloc is taken into con-

sideration for 1976 bills owed to the West, the figure reads around \$35 billion. If that's not staggering enough, then please note that the communists in Russia have ripped the U.S. off for \$263 billion since they

took power in 1917. Former President Nixon made arrangements with the Kremlin a few years ago to have World War II debts paid at 10 cents to the dollar. Try asking your banker if he'll accept similar terms with your mortgage.

As though this slap in the face isn't bad enough, the Russians have had the nerve to ask for favored nations status in order to receive even more liberal trade agreements! The Soviets have been campaigning very intensively so far this year to get more credit from the U.S., especially to remove all restrictions on long-term credits. Apparently the not so wise

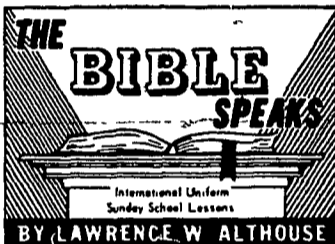
Background Scripture:
Mark 1:1-3; Luke 1:1-38.
Devotional Reading:
Luke 1:11-17.

When people of Palestine heard that a great prophet, perhaps even the Messiah, had come out of Nazareth, they were incredulous: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46).

It was a fair question and one could hardly blame them for their skepticism. Nazareth was an unimportant Galilean hilltown and it did not have the best of reputations. No one could remember that anything special had ever happened there, nor could they recall that prophesy had ever predicted that something important would happen there either. No wonder they wanted to know: "How can this be?"

The favored one

Elias, a Palestinian Christian who has frequently served as my excellent guide in the Holy Land, has often expressed to me the opinion that, even though Jesus grew up there, Nazareth seems no more likely a home for our Lord today than it did in the days of his youth. I would have to agree that, apart from its religious significance, it is one of the least hospitable shrines I have ever visited.



HOW SHALL THIS BE?

Lesson for December 5, 1976

This was at least one of the things that must have troubled Mary when she was visited by an angel and informed: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High" (Luke 1:30-32).

That had a wonderful sound to it, but she could hardly believe what she was hearing. Who ever heard of an angel of the Lord appearing in Nazareth? And to a woman of modest birth and means? But most amazing of all, how could this happen to a woman who didn't even have a husband?

No impossibilities with God
The visitor did not rebuke her question, but instead gave her an answer: "The

Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you: therefore the child to be born will be called Holy, the Son of God" (1:35). Her question, "How shall this be?" deserved an answer and the answer was that these seemingly impossible things would come to pass because of the power of the Holy Spirit in her.

The key to all of these questions is to be found in the angel's parting words to Mary: "For with God nothing will be impossible" (1:37). Nazareth may seem a most unlikely spot for the home of the Messiah, but God's power can overcome that difficulty. Mary may seem too lowly a vessel for the birth of the Son of God, but the power of God will magnify that vessel!

So it may be in our own lives when, having cried out in wonder, "How shall this be?" - how can a person such as I know the love of God in my life? How can my son be healed? How can my marriage be saved? How can I find a meaningful life? How can God's promises possibly be fulfilled? - we must listen once again with Mary and hear God's messenger say to us: "For with God nothing will be impossible!"

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NOW IS THE TIME

TO PROTECT ANIMALS FROM WILD BIRDS

The problem of wild birds confronts many livestock producers. They are especially bad in periods of snow cover on the ground. In addition, they are very difficult to control in outside feedlots and open barns. We do not know of an easy, prompt control or eradication method. When possible they should be screened out of a building. When this is impossible, I'd suggest the use of some "Starlite" feed pellets that are available from some of the feed concerns; they are

approved for use on birds in Pennsylvania. Some of our Amish farmers use a quarter-inch of common salt, covered with a quarter-inch

Farm Calendar

Today, Dec. 4
Lebanon Young Farmers' Christmas banquet, 7 p.m. in the Northern Lebanon High School cafeteria.
Travel and Adventure Series sponsored by the Paradise Rotary Club, 7:30 p.m. at Conestoga

(Continued on Page 26)

of melted lard in a flat pan; put this container on the roof of a shed, or on top of feeders or fences where livestock cannot reach. Wild birds not only destroy and use feed, but may be disease carriers.

TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE WATER

This time of the year it might be easier to water some livestock only once a day. This is not a good practice under any condition and will surely reduce gains and any kind of production. Water is one of the most important intakes of a bird or animal and is needed to

(Continued on Page 13)