

Comments

Private ownership vs. Public interest

The conflict between private land ownership and public needs is highlighted on our front page this week.

Joyce Bupp's story about sewage treatment in York County concerns a classic land-use confrontation. The York Sewer Authority is considering the condemnation of prime farm land to be used in the spray irrigation of treated sewage effluent.

There are unanswered questions about this method of sewage disposal. Short-term studies have shown that heavy metal buildups should not be a problem in soils receiving sewage effluent.

Recently, though, public health problems have been emerging decades after the fact of exposure. Soldiers exposed to A-bomb blasts in the 40's and 50's are dying of cancer. The daughters of mothers treated during pregnancy with DES, a female hormone, are contracting a rare form of cancer.

This last finding is one reason the FDA has banned the use of DES as a growth stimulant in cattle feed. Nobody knows for sure if DES in cattle feed will give people cancer. But is it worth the risk?

Nobody knows for sure if any harmful results will follow from heavy metal concentration on land that's sprayed for decades with sewage effluent. It's probably safe to use crops grown on that land for livestock feed.

But it's not beyond the realm of possibility that more research findings could indicate that such land should not be used for food production. This concerns the farmers whose land is under consideration. It should concern all of us.

Of more immediate concern to the farmers is the loss of farmland that's been in the same families, in some cases, for generations. The Authority says it may lease land, rather than buy it, but it would still control the land.

Spraying would be determined by the needs of the sewage treatment plans, not by the needs of the farmers who are working the land.

Inevitably, there would be times when the treatment process would leave the land too wet for fieldwork at critical points in the growing cycle.

The York County farming community is upset about the prospect of using farmland for sewage

treatment. They're upset about the loss of control over their farmland.

And yet, there's a clear need for more sewage treatment facilities in York County. In cases like this, the needs of the public, or at least what elected officials perceive as the needs of the public often prevail.

The issue is not between private interest and the public good. Private ownership and control of property has always been considered, in our society, to be in the best public interest.

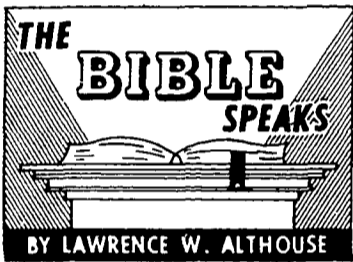
That historic fact has been mangled of late in the meat grinder of condemnation proceedings.

The confrontation in York County is not the first of its kind. It will not be the last.

Private landowners, particularly farmers who haven't the financial resources to wage legal war on those who would take over the control of their properties, may find themselves involved in ongoing battles to preserve their individual rights.

That kind of battle is not necessarily a losing fight.

But it is a battle that must be fought.



SELF- PORTRAIT

Lesson for September 9, 1979

Background Scripture
Exodus 14 through 15;
Deuteronomy 26:5-11.
Devotional Reading:
Psalms 106:1-12.

A little girl was observed to be working diligently at a drawing. "What are you drawing?" her teacher wanted to know. "It's going to be a picture of God," replied the little girl without looking up. "But no one knows what God looks like," her teacher said. "Well, they will when I'm finished!" was her terse reply.

Only a child or a fanatic could speak with so much confidence, for "What is God like?" has been one of the enduring questions which human beings have asked from the beginning of time itself. This question has been

the source of much speculation by philosophers and theologians, not to mention the rest of humanity. One result has been the development of a profile of divine attributes, so that we speak of God as being omnipotent (all-powerful), omnipresent (everywhere present), omniscient (all-knowing), and so forth.

Who Is Like Thee?

The ancient Hebrews rarely, if ever, spoke of the attributes of God. They thought of God, not so much in terms of what he is, but of what he does. Abstract words such as "holy" and "transcendent," meant little

to them. Their concept of God was almost totally dependent, not upon speculation, but upon observation. They focused their theology upon the acts of God, the things they saw him doing in their midst. From these acts, they saw emerge a portrait of the Lord. In a sense, we might say that these were "self-portraits," because in his acts God revealed himself to his people.

Thus, when Moses and the people of Israel, upon the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, sang their songs to the Lord, they asked that question which was older than the patriarchs them-

selves: "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?" (Exodus 15:11). And the reply they made to their own questions was centered, not in speculation, but in discerning what God had done for them: "... terrible in glorious deeds, doing wonders." It is in God's deeds and wonders that they see who and what he is.

With A Mighty Hand

In Deuteronomy 26 we find a ritual of thanksgiving and praise that is focused upon the mighty acts of God. As they place their offering in the hands of the priest, they are to recite a list of the wonderful acts by which God

has saved and sustained them: "... and you shall rejoice in all the good which the Lord your God has given to you and to your house..." (Deuteronomy 26:11).

Today we continue to ask, "What is God like?" and the speculation of our God-given minds is always a valid means of discovery and revelation. But the approach of the ancient Hebrews is no less valid and helpful: we can still discern who and what God is as we observe and interpret what we see him doing in the self-portraits he continues to paint upon the fabric of human experience.



TO GET LIVESTOCK EQUIPMENT

The moving and handling of livestock is a very important practice in this part of the state. We have thousands of livestock farms and there is a lot of traffic between farms and other public places. Producers who have the proper equipment to handle their livestock with

NOW IS THE TIME

By Max Smith Lancaster County Agricultural Agent
Phone 394-6851

minimum stress, will do better in the market place with less losses. I'm referring to loading ramps, cutting gates, and head gates. All of these can be made on the farm or purchased from commercial concerns. To handle and treat livestock without this equipment usually means more excitement, bruises, and loss of weight. Become equipped to do the job properly.

TO BEWARE OF SILO GAS

This is not a new thought but is still very important. There is great danger around silos this time of the

year when they are being filled. During the fermenting of the corn into silage there is often gases given off; many of these are dangerous and can kill both man or beast. Therefore, everyone working around the silo filling operation must be alert for these gases. They may be present during the filling process and for 10 to 14 days after filling. Most of these gases are heavier than air and have a smell similar to laundry bleaches. (similar to chlorine) Don't take chances by going into a partly filled silo, without using the blower, or working

near the silo chute following the filling operation. Gas masks and respirators should be used when the work has to be done.

TO IDENTIFY JOHNSON GRASS AREAS

Too many farms in this part of the country have some control problems with Johnson Grass. This sorghum-like grass grows very rank and will take over a field in a very few years. A few plants this year without control will result in hundreds of plants in the area next year. Farmers should mark the area of infection so that treatment can be ap-

plied properly. On fields where small grain was harvested. The re-growth of Johnson Grass can be sprayed with Roundup when 30 to 36 inches high. In corn fields the treatment should be next spring before the corn is planted. Some attention to the control of Johnson Grass is very important.

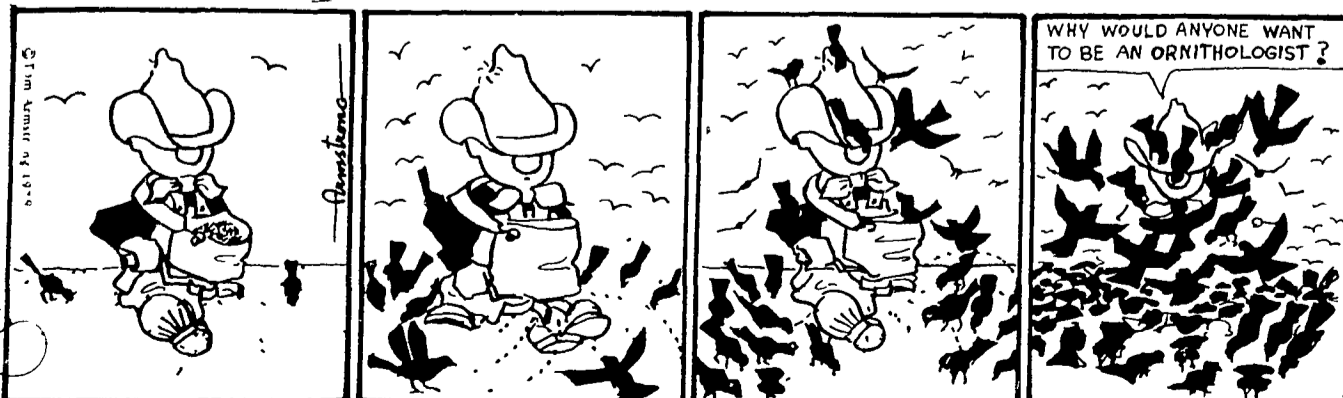
TO SECURE WOOD SUPPLY

Many home owners are planning to use more wood for heating purposes this winter. This is a national trend resulting in a strong demand for all kinds of wood. Prices are also reflecting this increased

demand. Woodlot owners might be in a position to do some tree culling and thinning and realize some extra income from the area. It's not too early to be getting this wood on hand or to do some cutting. Since dry wood will give better results than green wood, it will be best to have the wood supplies cut and drying before cold weather arrives. In my farm visits in recent months I have noticed more and more larger wood piles in the rural areas. Wood is a replaceable natural resource and deserves some attention in production as well as marketing for fuel-saving purposes.

RURAL ROUTE

By Tom Armstrong



Farm Calendar

Today, September 8
Bucks County Farm Tours.
Woodsmen's Festival at the Green Tree Fire Station, Milton Grove, Pa.
York Interstate Fair today through next Saturday.
Monday, September 10
Southeastern 4-H District dairy show at Kutztown.

Friday, September 14
Pa. Egg Marketing Association meeting at the Sheraton-Conestoga Village, Lancaster, beginning at 7 p.m.

Saturday, September 15
4-H District horse show at Lancaster riding club.