



Off the Sounding Board

By Sheila Miller, Editor

How you gonna keep 'em?

"You can't keep a good man down" is a slogan most of us have grown up with and have come to take for granted.

Of course nowadays that slogan would have to read: "You can't keep a good 'person' down" but the meaning still is the same. A well-qualified individual who performs well on the job will assuredly succeed in moving up the career ladder.

In most cases, this achievement by employees serves as an asset to the company, creating a competent foundation for carrying on the business. But such is not the case with veterinarians who find employment with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

In this bureaucratic maze, as a veterinarian becomes trained and proficient in the job, outside forces lurk on the periphery, ready to lure these highly skilled servants-of-the-state into the civilian market by dangling a 'golden carrot' in front of their noses.

It's a fact of life that most people's goals in life are to operate at a higher standard of living. And with veterinarian school loans to repay and the temptation of a lucrative private practice or position with a financially sound industry constantly confronting them, many civil service veterinarians leave the state after only a short stay, taking with them the experiences and expertise acquired on the job.

Filling these vacant posts is double-trouble for the Agriculture Department. Civil service regulations only allow new employees to be hired at a specified salary level — usually far below what a veterinarian could earn in private practice. Because of this salary limitation, finding highly qualified, experienced veterinarians to fill the job is generally a fruitless task.

Take for instance the ongoing plight of PDA to find a replacement for Dr. Edward Mallinson, former Chief of Avian Health. Mallinson left the Department in October 1980 to assume a position at the University of Maryland in poultry extension.

According to Chief Veterinarian Max Van Buskirk there is "very little interest among poultry-oriented veterinarians for the position because PDA cannot be competitive salary-wise for a competent, qualified person."

In order to fill the vacant post, Van Buskirk stated a task force has been established to locate "reasonably qualified" veterinarians who can be trained in avian health while on the job. Working on this committee are representatives of industry, the University of Pennsylvania veterinary school, and Penn State.

Finding that person unquestionably has been hampered because of the salary limitations set up by civil service. A starting salary for this administrative job would fall in

the range of \$21,555 to \$28,108. Then after six months, the Secretary of Agriculture could promote the veterinarian to a salary of \$28,000 up to a maximum of \$32,000.

"The problem is not whether the person is worth it," stated Van Buskirk. "It's that industry is paying much more."

What's needed here is a change in the rules. An adjustment of the salary ranges so that the state can compete in the job market for qualified veterinarians.

But even if these black-and-white rules are modified on paper, they won't have much effect unless the dollars are there to back them up. And with budget cuts being the in-thing in all administrations these days, it seems doubtful there will be much financial incentive to entice qualified personnel into the bureaucratic ranks.

"You can't be furloughing some employees and giving raises to others," Van Buskirk acknowledged.

And so the problem continues.

As a result, Pennsylvania farmers are being short-changed.

The Pennsylvania Poultry Federation recently met with Secretary of Agriculture Penrose Hallowell, Deputy Secretary Luther Snyder, Van Buskirk, and Dr. Charles Clark, head of the Laboratories Division. The Federation pointed out the current limitations of poultry diagnostic laboratories due to restricted funding and pinpointed a "communications breakdown in disease control due to the absence of a central coordinator" — the Avian Health chief.

The poultry farmers are not alone in feeling the effects of budget cuts. With fewer dollars to cover costs, PDA's diagnostic labs are operating short-handed. Skilled technicians and veterinarians are exiting for more remunerative jobs. As a result, expanded diagnostic programs are nipped in the bud since personnel are already up to their ears in old programs, such as brucellosis and rabies testing. Penn State's and U. of Penn's laboratories are helping out — but how long they can continue to pinch-hit for PDA is uncertain due to the schools' own budgetary problems.

It all boils down to money — can Pennsylvania afford to keep training 'green' veterinarians at the expense of its farmers. And, even if PDA manages to find reasonably qualified people to fill the job vacancies, the question is "For how long?"

We'd all be better off if top-notch, experienced veterinarians could be kept financially satisfied and retained on the state's payroll so that farmers wouldn't have to keep paying the price of in-house education.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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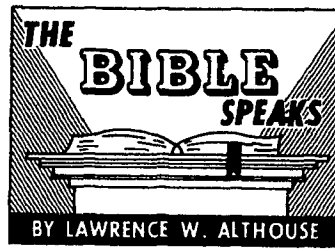
To Service Farm Machinery
This is the time of the year to be preparing your farm equipment for spring work. In the first place, this machinery should not be out in the weather. I still see too much machinery left out in the fields and barnyards. This is not good management and will shorten the life of the equipment. Repairing farm machinery is necessary every year, and now would be a good time to make use of the off-season labor supplies. Machinery

is a huge investment and should be kept in good condition at all times. Rain and snow will soon develop rust on equipment; this will shorten the life span and is a primary cause of many unnecessary breakdowns.

To Be Aware of Child Labor Laws
If you have boys or girls between the ages of 14 and 16 that plan to operate a farm tractor or machinery on a farm, other than your own farm, be sure they have the proper certificate. Under the

child labor regulations, the law requires that those boys or girls between 14 and 16 years of age, be certified and carry a certification card before they are permitted to operate hazardous equipment. Some equipment listed under the law as hazardous are, a tractor with over 20 PTO horsepower, corn picker, hay baler, feed grinder, fork lift and many more. Again, on your own farm, your children can

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AFRAID OF THE LIGHT?
January 17, 1982

Background Scripture:
John 1:1-13; 12:44-50
Devotional Reading:
1 John 1:1-10.

Surely the title above must be incorrect!

I meant to say "afraid of the dark," didn't I?

No, I meant to question whether some of us are afraid, not of darkness, but of the light. For it has seemed to me that although many of us—perhaps all of us—as children fear the darkness, as we grow older some of us grow increasingly more fond of the darkness.

Men Loved Darkness

In Morton Kelsey's book, *The Other Side of Silence* (Paulist Press, 1976), there is a story about a man who wanted to grow in spiritual depth. Under the guidance of a teacher, he made great progress. Then, however, the teacher had to be away for six months and it was a half-year later that he once again encountered his former pupil. Asked how he was doing in his spiritual life, the former pupil replied that he stopped all religious practices and did not intend to resume. To the astonished teacher's "Why?" he replied, "I saw a little light and I didn't like it." Concludes Kelsey, "The light made too many demands on him."

That is precisely what it means when we speak of Jesus as "The Light of the world." That light came into our world, as John puts

it, to "enlighten" all of us, to help us to see things as they really are and are meant to be. But the light is more than a comfort, it is also a challenge. As Kelsey put it, it makes demands upon us. And if we are not willing to give it, we begin to prefer the darkness where we can hide. As John says, "For everyone who does evil, hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (3:20).

No it is not far-fetched for me to suggest that some of us prefer the darkness to light. "And this is the judgement," wrote John, "that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil" (3:19).

I Come As Light

All of us are glad that there are some aspects of our lives that are not out in the open for everyone to see. There are some thoughts, actions, and attitudes we are glad to keep a secret within us. At the same time, we realize that with God there is nothing that is hidden. He knows our most detestable thoughts, our deepest temptations, and our actions that never come to the attention of others.

Therefore, some will regard the Light of the World as an unwelcome intrusion in their lives. Yet, fearful as it is to be so completely known by God, isn't it also confronting and reassuring? God knows both the worst and best about us and he loves us nonetheless. There is nothing in our lives that is truly hidden from him. But isn't it good to have at least someone from whom we do not have to hide the truth? Instead of fearing and trying to escape the Light into our lives, we can welcome it, knowing that it is by the power of that Light that we are freed of darkness, that we no longer have to carry secret burdens. Jesus himself promised, "I have come as light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness."

OUR READERS WRITE, AND OTHER OPINIONS

Farm bill shows political nearsightedness

The new four-year Omnibus Farm Bill, passed by Congress last month in the House by a margin vote of 205-203, and signed by President Reagan in a closed ceremony at the White House, in

our opinion, is a disappointing example of budgetary capitulation and political nearsightedness.

Loan rates on major commodities such as corn and wheat, (Turn to Page A12)

HAY HAWS



"I've got to let three of you go. Whoever wants to do the work of four can be the one who stays."