



# Christmas on farm

## Part II

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

(This is the second segment of a four-part holiday message from a Christmas on a small Pennsylvania farm a number of years ago.)

When the father and son arose early for their second day of chicken deliveries, the smaller half of the farm duo was still feeling his loss from the previous day. The boy was "down in the dumps," but all the more determined that today he would get an even better holiday treat from one of their customers.

Again, the first stop after the morning chores was with the old German carpenter for a new supply of repaired boxes and crates for the dressed birds. This time the father and the older man conversed briefly in soft, guttural tones that were a curious combination of High German and Pennsylvania Dutch.

Although the boy couldn't hear them -- and if he did, he wouldn't have understood -- he knew from the frequent glances in his direction that the two men were talking primarily about him.

Soon with a new batch of boxes and crates and the birds neatly packed in them, the pair were off on a new round of deliveries.

At each stop the boy made sure he toddled along up to the door and was prominently positioned so that he was easily seen by the customer. After his disastrous experience the day before of losing his shiny, new nickel, he didn't want to miss any opportunities for another possible treat.

He was so anxious that he would bound out of the truck, often leaving his door open. The father admonished him a couple of times but soon gave up. His youthful enthusiasm wasn't to be deterred.

The boy was looking forward particularly to the stop at the big home of the spinster sisters. These two kind old ladies were his best chance for a treat even if they liked to do dumb things like squeeze him with hugs and pinch his rosy cheeks. But they were known far and wide for their homemade candies.

Finally, they arrived at the sisters' house -- the third from last stop. And sure enough they had a treat waiting even if it did cost an extra firm pair of hugs and a stinging couple of cheek pinches. But it was worth it when the sisters handed him a box of his favorite candies -- brightly colored hard pieces in shapes of the season and both light and dark chocolate oozing with all those mysterious, delicious fillings.

All the way to the next to last stop, the boy stared at the contents of the box. But as soon as the truck stopped again, he placed it hurriedly on the seat beside him and rushed



out, forgetting to close his door again.

And enroute to the last delivery of the day, he repeated his transfixed gaze.

"If you could eat with your eyes, the box would already be empty," his father remarked.

At the last stop the boy again jumped from the truck, leaving the box with top ajar on the seat next to the open door. While this was the last stop, it didn't dampen his youthful enthusiasm for yet another possible treat.

Perhaps because this last stop was "treatless," he could literally taste the candy as he ran back to the truck. But even before he got to the truck he could see through the open door that the seat was empty. Frantically he looked around and just managed to catch a glimpse of a running dog about to turn a corner, the cardboard box with trailing red ribbon tightly clutched in its jaws.

The downhearted boy hardly heard the words of his father as they drove back to the farm.

"Yesterday, you spent your nickel in your mind before you really got a chance to spend it.

"Today, you ate your candy with your eyes before you even had a chance to taste it.

"Both the coin and candy were something you looked for and already had consumed almost before they were really yours.

"When you seek something so hard just for the sake of personal gain or satisfaction, perhaps you're not supposed to have it in the first place.

"It's sure starting to look that way."

But the boy's head was only filled with thoughts of tomorrow's deliveries -- the last before Christmas.

PART III -- NEXT WEEK

**THE BIBLE SPEAKS**  
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

**THE MANTLE OF PRAISE**  
December 11, 1983

Background Scripture: Isaiah 61.

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 61:8,9.

One of my seminary professors, Dr. James Muilenberg, has said of Isaiah 61: "A poem such as this is not of an age but for all time." It is as fresh today as it was several thousand years ago when it was first written and I suspect it will be no less timely in the centuries that follow ours.

Perhaps the poem is more precious to us because we know it meant so much to our Lord, who began his public ministry in Nazareth's synagogue by quoting the opening verses of Isaiah's poem. When he had finished reading from the scroll, he sat down and startled everyone by saying, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 4:21). Clearly, Jesus identified his own mission in life with the mission of the "servant" in this and other passages from the Book of Isaiah.

### THE FAINT SPIRIT

What could be more compelling than for Jesus to describe his mission in these words?

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim

liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim claim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn...to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit (Is. 61:1-3a).

The poor, the broken-hearted, the captives and the mourners--all of these were the beneficiaries of Christ's ministry. Wherever he found people living in brokenness, he came with comfort, healing, and liberation. When he touched someone's life, it was the touch of the spirit to a "mantle of praise."

The prophet Isaiah wrote this passage as a hymn of encouragement to the people of Israel who languished in exile and isolation. As a servant, he came to them with a message of hope. For God would in his own time restore them with his divine aid. "They shall build up the ancient ruins," he promised, "they shall restore the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities..." (Is. 61:4).

### AN EVERLASTING COVENANT

The restoration which Jesus had in mind as he read these prophetic words was much more than just the physical and material benefits they had once known. Nothing less than their very souls would experience his healing touch. His promise runs deeper, wider and longer than that given by Isaiah.

But it was never intended that the roll of the servant should end with Jesus and this poem continues to call us to take upon ourselves this same "mantle of praise." For "the Spirit of the Lord" is upon us, too.

## NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

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### To Be Careful With Antibiotics

The use of drugs and other materials is a part of the livestock and poultry business and a part of health management; the use of these materials is not the problem...it's the misuse of them that causes trouble. All livestock, poultry and dairy producers are urged to follow the directions for use on the container, and especially the withdrawal time.

The government agencies are on the alert for excessive residues in meat, milk and eggs. Most an-

tiobiotics require a withdrawal period before marketing the product. If these are not followed, the product and the market may be in jeopardy. Also, accurate records should be kept of the material used, the amount and the exact time of treatment. Don't take chances.

### To Be Patient With People

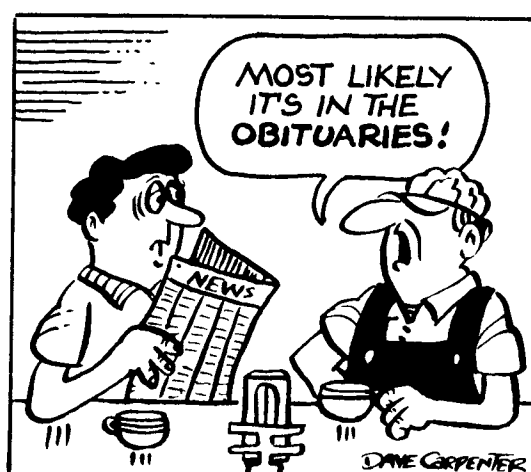
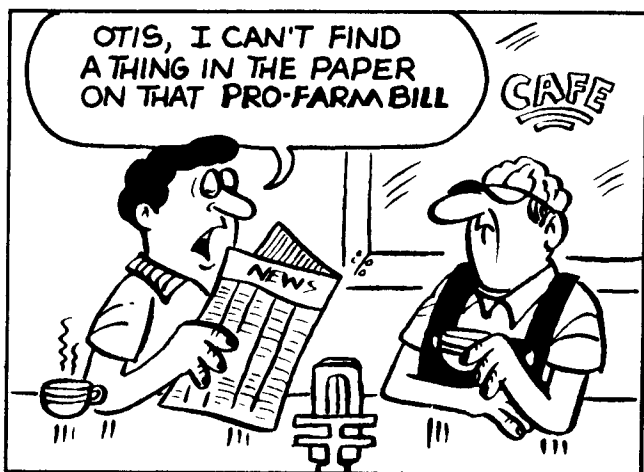
Farming in the best of times is a very stressful occupation. Then add to that the low returns over the last several years and dry conditions over much of the area; we increase the stress factor. Now, on top of all that, we have Avian Influenza in many poultry flocks.

I point this out so that people working with our farmers understand the needs and cares of others. We all need to be patient and understanding and look at the many good things we have to be thankful for...our families, freedom and the ability to come back after being down. Take time to talk with your friends and neighbors and share the many good times you've had together. Let's enjoy the holiday season and be thankful for all the good things in life.

To Practice Holiday Safety  
This is not a new idea but one

(Turn to Page A12)

## Otis



DAVE CARPENTER