



Christmas on farm

Part IV

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN

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

Christmas Eve day on the small Pennsylvania farm brought snow. The boy followed the footprints of the father as they stamped out twin trails through the new blanket of white, starting from the house to the barn, over to the chicken house and hog pen and finally back to the house.

Breakfast was quiet. Almost so quiet that the cooked oats seemed to crunch.

"First, we'll go up on the hill and cut our tree and then drive over to the Old German," the father said, vainly trying to get some holiday spirit back into those little eyes.

But the walk up the hill in the crisp air over the new-fallen snow failed to rekindle any spark in the boy. The finding of almost a perfect tree had no effect either.

The boy tried to get out of the ride to the Old German. He had had enough of delivering chickens. Three days of it had brought only the worst disappointments of his young life.

"But the Old German made a point of saying twice that he wanted to see you," the father reminded.

"And I've never heard of him ever making such a request before.

"You must go along."

The boy crawled up into the truck -- the truck that had been the center of his dismal three days. As it stopped, he protested walking along up to the small dwelling, but finally tagged behind his father.

The Old German accepted the chicken with the customary half-hearted protest and then went back into the house, asking the father and son to wait a minute. He returned to the door carrying a plain-wrapped package and handed it to the boy.

Mixing German with faltering English, he spoke to the boy. Pointing to the crates and boxes piled nearby and needing repairs, he explained that those he made with his "Hande."

But this, indicating the package, he made with his "Herz" (heart).

The boy accepted the package in silence and remained quiet all the way home. Opening it later on Christmas Eve, the boy found what



had come from the Old German's heart.

The brown paper package tied with plain string contained a complete handmade and hand-carved farm setting.

The barn with sloping roof had one open side and contained a couple of stalls, complete with mangers. There was a chicken coop, a hog pen and even a dog house.

Small animal figures had been whittled and cut out -- horse, cows, sheep, pigs, dog, chickens and ducks.

Tiny wooden people too -- a father, mother and smaller ones.

Even a tractor and a car.

The boy didn't even notice or care how crude and primitive was the farm set. Obviously, the Old German had worked long into the past few nights to get it done. The scale was all wrong and the pieces were hewn rather hurriedly from the scraps of boxes and crates.

But, the boxes and crates were made by hands.

The farm set was a product of the heart.

Even the young boy understood and has never forgotten when the father said:

"Before, you went looking for Christmas gifts -- only to have them slip away.

"But this was a gift you didn't seek.

"The best blessings in life are those that come when you least expect them and when you need them most."

Some of the pieces of this "blessing of the heart" have been lost or broken over the years.

But there's still enough that remains to be brought out each holiday and placed beneath the tree to remember and relive a Christmas on a small Pennsylvania farm quite a few years ago.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

OUR READERS WRITE, AND OTHER OPINIONS

WHO MAKES SURPLUS?

Dear Editor:

I'm disgusted that Reagan and Bold came up with such a crazy

Farm Bill concerning the dairymen.

First of all, no dairyman milking less than 75 cows, no farmer far-

ming less than 500 acres, no hog man raising a few hundred hogs a year and no poultryman with less

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Otis



THE BIBLE SPEAKS
BY LAWRENCE W. ALTHOUSE

SOMETHING MORE
December 25, 1983

Background Scripture: Isaiah 9 1-7, 11 1-10

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 12 1-6

We don't know how the people received Isaiah's prophecy about the coming of the messianic king. But it is quite likely that there were some who were disappointed.

The promises themselves were comforting and encouraging enough: the messiah would come as "a great light," he would end their oppression, and put an end to strife. He would rule the world "with justice and righteousness" and all peoples together would call him "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:6).

A CHILD IS BORN

But there was also a prophecy that the messiah would come to them in the form of a little baby: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given." No matter how popular the birth of male babies in Israel, that certainly wasn't what they were looking for. They wanted a fullgrown leader to rule them and help them throw-off the oppression of their enemies. A child -- no matter what it's destiny -- was something considerable less than they were expecting.

Yet, it is now apparent that they also received something more than they were expecting. This "child" that would be born among them, in addition to his other gifts and talents, would be blessed with the greatest spiritual endowment:

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the feat of the Lord.

All the best attributes of the kings of Israel -- and considerable more -- would be incarnate in this messiah. "He shall not judge by what his eyes see or decide by what his ears hear."

WOLF AND LAMB

But the people of Israel were also to receive "something more" than relief from their enemies. The messiah whom Isaiah envisioned would be a "Prince of Peace," whose coming would herald a day when eventually "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together."

That certainly had to be something considerable "more" than they were expecting. It would not be just freedom from oppression that God would give them, but that much more positive and engrossing quality of peace itself: "They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain..."

Though they may have thought they were getting something less, as God keeps the score, they were getting something worth a lot more. And that's always part of the meaning of Christmas, too. No matter our state in life, no matter how we assess our own importance, we always get more than we expect or deserve from God.

NOW IS THE TIME

By Jay Irwin

Lancaster County Agriculture Agent
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To Take Inventory

An area of our operation that is very important at this time of year is inventory. With the close of the year most of our farmers close-out their records for the year. This means that if you are going to have a Farm Analysis made you should take inventory of all your supplies. You'll need this to do any kind of farm analysis because the amount of grain, hay and other supplies that are in storage will vary from year to year, and unless this is taken into consideration, you cannot have an accurate analysis of your year's operation. So, as accurately as possible, record the amount of hay, grain, feed, seeds and fertilizer that are on hand. This is the first step in an accurate farm analysis.

To Sort Tobacco

Tobacco stripping is underway in this part of the state and many hours will be spent removing the leaves from the stalk. The days of special handling and sizing seems to be over; however, it is still very

important that growers sort the injured and ground leaves from the good tobacco. This will be required if the crop is being sold on grade. With some "pull off" crops this is less important. On the other hand growers should be fair enough to sort out the undesirable leaves. If this is not done, the buyer will be unhappy and look elsewhere for their tobacco supplies. Some sorting is necessary with every crop, regardless of the method of selling.

To Protect Small Pigs

Cold weather is here and many small feeder pigs are not given sufficient protection. In our modern open-fronted finishing houses the small pigs may become too cold and come down with digestive and respiratory problems. We suggest that the pens be covered with boards, or other materials to form a hover over the back part of the pen. This will help maintain body heat and reduce the chance of any drafts over the smaller pigs. When the pigs pile up during cold weather, they are not warm enough. You may want to use heat lamps, or other forms of supplemental heat, on the small pigs during very cold weather.

To Protect Trees and Shrubs

Your trees and shrubs will be able to withstand the winter conditions in better shape -- with a little help from you. Some winter protection might help save your valued trees and shrubs.

Thin-barked trees can be damaged by sunscald in the winter. That's why it's a good idea

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