



OPINION

The Christmas Story

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child. All they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

"Togetherness" Very Refreshing

One of the most impressive displays of farmer leadership and farmer support of that leadership has come out of Lancaster Red Rose DHIA's quest for autonomy in the state centralization process. The concern of these leadership committee members has revolved around the fact that Red Rose has a very effective and efficient program. Red Rose leaders do not want to see the county program slip backward for any reason.

No one can really blame these leaders for this concern. Consider that Red Rose has more than 58,000 cows on test in more than 1,100 herds. This makes their organization one of the largest units in the nation. In addition, the organization is run by a good manager, Jay Mylin, and has 19 supervisors and additional helpers, many of whom have received efficiency honors and many who have 25 to 40 years of service as Red Rose supervisors.

Also consider that the production level of Lancaster herds increased almost 1,000 pounds of milk in the last testing year and the number of herds over 20,000 pounds of milk doubled.

Red Rose showed a margin of \$3,000 for the year has equity of \$49,000.

Because of these facts, the Red Rose leadership looked at other options that would keep their organization together. In the process, conflicts arose--conflicts that the Lancaster leadership never really wanted or intended to happen.

Now, National DHIA rules and contracts have come into

question, all because Red Rose leaders simply want to do what they believe is best for their members.

The affirmation that surfaced from the membership at the Red Rose annual meeting last week was heart warming. When Curtis Akers led the resolution of support for the board and committee, members showed a "togetherness" in organization that may have been unprecedented in the history of the dairy industry. The unity of purpose was clearly evident.

This level of leadership and responsible effort to represent membership is very refreshing.



NOW IS THE TIME

By John Schwartz
Lancaster County
Agricultural Agent

To Pick Up Farmer's Tax Guides

The 1991 version of the Farmer's Tax Guide published by the Internal Revenue Service is available at your local extension office. Now is an excellent time to pick up your copy and begin planning this year's taxes.

Some important changes which the IRS points out on the front cover include:

- The standard mileage rate for business use of cars or pickups has been increased to 27.5 cents per mile.

- The self-employment tax rate for the year is 15.3 percent of which 12.4 percent is for Social Security and 2.9 percent is for Medicare.

- In 1991, the first \$53,400 worth of income is subject to Social Security.

Every farmer should take time to read the tax guide. It alerts you to information you will want to consider when you fill out your return or will want to discuss with your tax preparer.

To Prepare For Safe Winter Driving

Winter is here! According to some people, this could be the coldest and snowiest winter we will have in recent years.

It is always a good idea to have a winter emergency kit for your car. Items for this kit would include an ice scraper with a brush on one end, snow shovel, jumper cables, blankets and extra clothing, flashlight with extra batteries, abrasive material (cat litter, sand, traction mat, etc.), brightly colored cloth to signal for help, and first aid supplies. This kit will be very helpful in dealing with a winter-weather-related emergency.

To Consider Holiday Safety Tips

The Christmas season finds us celebrating a very important event in the Christian faith.

We do this in a variety of ways. One way is by decorating our homes. Make sure you are following good safety practices. Make sure your tree lights have the UL seal.

When buying new lights, consider purchasing miniature tree lights since they generate much less heat and use less energy. Do not run extension cords under carpets. Do not use outdoor lights

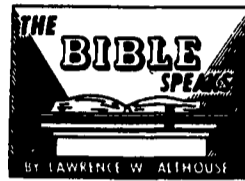
indoors because they usually burn hotter.

Turn off lights before going to bed or leaving the house. Make sure your tree is watered every day. Keep portable heaters away from decorations. Do not overload circuits on your household wiring system. Remember, electricity generates heat and, under certain situations, this heat may become hot enough to start a fire.

By following these safety rules you will be reducing your chances of fire. Also, it would be a good idea to check your smoke alarm and replace the battery. If you do not have smoke alarms in your house, I would strongly recommend you place them on your Christmas list. Smoke alarms do save lives.

Do have a safe and joyous holiday season.

Feather Prof's Footnote: "No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave." — Calvin Coolidge.



A LITTLE LESS THAN GOD
December 29, 1991

Background Scripture: Psalms 8.

Devotional Reading: John 1:1-18.

Both the commentaries I consulted indicate that Psalm 8 originally belonged to the evening service in the temple, when those standing in the court of the temple could see the night sky. I can well understand how the Psalmist felt when he said these words for the first time:

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth!

Often when I look into the night sky and see all those pin-points of light, when I realize what a small part of the solar system we are, and even more, what a tiny speck is our galaxy in the whole universe, those words come to me as they did to him. It is then that I realize that my denominational loyalties, withered and pickled by my uninspired human imagination. It takes the vastness of a night sky, the fascination of still another universe revealed by a microscope, or the wonder mirrored in a newborn baby's face to lead me beyond my prosaic understanding of just how majestic are the finger prints of God in the world. I can see, let alone those evidence in the world I cannot see or imagine.

BIG THOUGHTS

And then, when I have thought those big, big thoughts, and tried to see where I cannot see, something makes me look from the heavens to myself and say:

When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers.

The moon and the stars which thou has established;

What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?

Two thoughts that seem irreconcilable: the majesty of God and the seeming insignificance of our human nature. The gap between God and our human nature must be greater than the length and breadth of the universe!

That is when I am always brought up short with the words of the Psalmist:

Yet thou hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honor.

"A little less than God"? No, even allowing for poetic license, is it not audacious to say "a little less than God"?

ROYAL CROWNED

Yes it is audacious, but still, according to the Psalmist, it must be said. Just so that we do not miss his point, he goes on to say that we are crowned "with honor and glory." Only kings and queens are thus crowned and the Psalmist is thus telling us that each and every one of us is royalty in the order of God's creation.

We may not have any trouble believing in the royalty of presidents, kings diplomats, artists, thespians, sports superstars, entertainers, captains of industry, but that isn't what the Psalmist is saying. He is saying that to be a human being, a creature of God, is to occupy a place of royalty in the created order.

Wonderful! Yes, but also intimidating, for if that is the way God has created us, if he has given us "dominion over the works of thy hands," and "hast put all things under his feet," each and every one of us needs to recognize this divine potential and begin to live up to it while there is yet time to do so.

"O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth!" And how great is the potential you have given us!

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"HAPPY HOLIDAYS EVERYONE AND THE VERY BEST TO YOU, IN 1992"
FROM
UNCLE OTIS and DAVE CARPENTER