



Your Living Environment

Vol. III No. 1

January, 1972

RE-EDUCATION VIA RESEARCH NEWS

Publication of Your Living Environment by The Agriculture Department of Ambassador College, Bricket Wood, has stimulated considerable interest over a wide range of important problems. And as this issue begins the third year of publication it is perhaps timely that we should review our activities.

One may well ask how did it get started and why? Who is receiving it and what effect is it having? Why is it written the way it is? Should it not be more specific and detailed?

Surely any explanation of the right methods of agriculture should cover specific questions such as rotations, stocking rates, sowing times and rates, exact applications of fertilizer, individual breeds of animals, plant varieties etc. in great detail. Yet this monthly Research News has not done so, even in spite of the fact that many environmentalists in God's Church deeply desire just this type of information.

Is it not an ideal vehicle for conveying such facts and information to the educators, students and farmers who receive it regularly?

Then why are the various subjects discussed in a general, academic and even slightly theoretical way? Why not come to grips with the specific daily decisions facing food producers? Wouldn't that be the most helpful approach?

Birth of an Idea

Collection, sifting and analysis of reams of information is one of the main tasks of the department in its study of agriculture and environment. But after two years of studying the relationship of the Bible to Agriculture, the conclusions of other researchers and our own observations -- we ended up with a frustrating problem. Knowledge and understanding had increased enormously within

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE (U.K.) LTD.

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE, AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT, RESEARCH NEWS

Copyright © 1972 by Ambassador College
All Rights Reserved

the department and therefore within God's Work, but it was not leaving the Agriculture Office! In discussions with Mr. Schurter it was agreed that at least the Faculty should have easy access to the fruits of our labours.

However, campus life is too intense and active to allow these educators time to enter deeply into one another's fields. It was then that the Agriculture Department conceived the idea of a monthly Research News Bulletin.

The idea was put to Mr. McNair and he accepted the proposal as a means of conveying environmental information to personnel at Bricket Wood and those working under him in the field.

To be of any real value the contents had to be brief, clear, positively oriented and at the same time intellectually intriguing enough to gain the attention of ministers, lecturers, department heads and students.

Readership Expansion

The information in the early issues quickly caught the attention of many readers. It was not long before the contents were being discussed appreciatively and ministers passing through Bricket Wood from other areas were requesting their own copies.

Soon the recipients were eagerly accepting the regular monthly issues. We began to receive many favourable comments, especially from those in direct contact with agriculturalists. Here was a service they valued because the Research News provided regular first-hand reports of Ambassador College's approach to the rural side of man's environment.

Furthermore, Your Living Environment has been a means of clearing away many misconceptions created by second-hand information about the work of the Agriculture Department. And it can take care of others that might arise in the future.

As executives and ex-agronomy students from England travelled around the world, a trickle of requests for the Research News started to filter in from the men staffing our Offices in other areas. After further discussion with Mr. McNair these requests were granted.

There was still no real need to provide detailed information on specific farming problems. Perspective, background and objective understanding on agricultural matters were of most value to these educators reading the monthly Research News.

Farmers -- next!

It was not long before a number of farmer members also became aware of the material being released through Your Living Environment. Their persistent and increasing volume of requests to be put on a mailing list finally convinced Mr. McNair to agree to an extended readership.

At the Feast of Tabernacles 1970, in Minehead, Church members were told that they could receive a regular monthly copy providing they were directly involved in agriculture and/or horticulture. It was also stipulated that they must be willing to cover printing and postage costs. The reason being that Your Living Environment is a campus publication only.

But does the fact that an increasing number of farmers are now reading this Research News mean that its approach and presentation should be altered? Should it now become more specific?

How Specific is God -- Agriculturally?

Note that the Bible does not recommend any sowing depth for grain, what rotation to use, or how much fertilizer to apply in any given circumstance! God limited His advice and guidance about agriculture to a few simple but meaningful laws. His instruction goes little beyond The Sabbatical Year, The Jubile and firstlings! And even these are covered in a few verses.

However, just one single law, the Land Sabbath, (as explained in Vol.I, No.9) outlines the entire framework of the "right" system of food production. The economic forces that God built into these short powerful commands to His people dictate the food-production system that will be most successful for anyone intent on obeying His laws. But they do not dictate the specific details such as the variety of cereal grains to grow, nor when or how. Nowhere does God say -- you shall not grow maize, or you shall grow lucerne.

God provides only the overall framework, the skeleton of the system He has designed to work in the best interests of man. Of course some may think that this is the very reason why God's Agriculture Departments should go into great detail. We do become more specific than the Bible, but God has left the more detailed decisions to the individual. This works well, because each man knows his local circumstances best, such as soil type, climate, finances, markets etc. And in this way God provides His people with ideal training opportunities for greater stewardship in the world tomorrow!

Our recent years of working directly with farmers have convinced both branches of The Division of Agriculture (Texas and England) that elaboration of general principles is the best guidance. An overall perspective of God's system of environmental management and an in-depth understanding is what is needed. Masses of minor details and technicalities will cause the average reader to bog down in a morass that may not even apply in his circumstances. Besides, space just will not permit such detail!

Why "Perspective" is Emphasized

In His overall laws, God provides the correct perspective from which to view all agricultural problems (see Vol.II, No.12). And experience in this department has confirmed that Your Living Environment needs to follow the same example.

It is our job to probe and explain the various aspects, implications and ramifications of God's environmental laws -- thus making the all important "skeleton" more vivid to the reader.

Circumstances vary so widely in different areas that specific recommendations of fertilizers, crops, etc., are unwise. Only principles are applicable in such a wide range of situations. While the various practices, methods and materials to be used for the best application of God's system of agriculture will vary from area to area.

The farmer himself must decide specific details, after acquiring the overall perspective and an understanding of the principles of God's agricultural laws.

Success in Environmental Management

We have found that those most successful in utilizing God's agricultural laws have at least two things in common:

First, they remain close to God and thus have access to the faith, mental balance and sound-mindedness that can come only from His very mind and character.

Secondly, they have recognized the value of self-education and gone after it. In doing so they have realized that the two Departments of Agriculture in Ambassador College cannot at this time supply the wealth of detailed information, ideas, alternatives and possibilities available on "natural" or "organic" agriculture.

These men have therefore embarked on an extensive and absorbing self-education programme. It involves the principles, problems, practices and possibilities of right agriculture. To do this they have sought out books and other written material on many subjects. (Big Sandy and Bricket Wood Agriculture Departments both supply a book list for fundamental reading. Remember that these lists enable you to capitalize on many hundreds of hours of reading research and evaluation that has been done for you. They constitute just the tip of the iceberg, which means that you don't have to pick your way through the under-lying mass of material.)

By combining these three sources (the Bible, Ambassador College and other recommended literature) with an alert, observant and inquiring mind, we can all make the preparations so necessary for success in managing our God-given environment.

Farmers are particularly prone to forget that our need of education does not stop with the end of school. Continual self-education (in addition to the work of God's Ministry and Ambassador College) is necessary for spiritual success and so too it is necessary for agricultural success and prosperity.

Whether you are Faculty, Farmer or Student, we hope that Your Living Environment can continue to provide you with early access to the latest information available from this department.