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Sky Pilot News June 1971

Marella Mission Farm
Sky Pilot Fellowship Ltd., Marella Mission Farm

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SKY PILOT NEWS

June 1971

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Louisa and Pat.
GEORGE'S TITHE: From the Sky Pilot's Log, 2CH Broadcast

To those unfamiliar with the Northern Territory it may be difficult to understand how a man without cattle—or without any great number of cattle—is able to build up a large herd within a few years. At the time of this story Joe had not been long in the north. When he heard that George, who had sold all his cattle and gone to Queensland for a time, had returned to the north with less than twenty head of cattle in order to start a new cattle station, Joe thought he was mad.

"Smithy," said Joe, "you know George pretty well, don't you?"

"Yes, Joe, I have known him for years. Why?"

"Well, is he quite right in the head? I mean, he isn't a bit simple, is he?"

"Far from it. George is a very clever old rascal—and a very lovable one too. What's he been doing now?"

"He's taken up a lease near Long Billabong and brought about 20 head of cattle back to start a new cattle station."

"What's wrong about that?" I asked. "It's good country, well watered and surrounded by other cattle stations. He should do well."

"The country's all right," admitted Joe. "But how long is it going to take him to build up a herd of a couple of thousand cattle from twenty beasts?"

"It would take the average stockman about ten years. George should be able to do it within two or three years."

"Two or three years? Oh, don't be silly; cattle don't breed that quick."

"No one expects them to. Most of the cattle stations—or I should say some of them in this country have been built up from nothing more than a team of working bullocks."

"Now you're as mad as George," Joe complained. "I don't know much about cattle, but I'm not as green as I look. I know bullocks don't breed."

"They don't need to. Perhaps I'd better explain. There have been cattle stations up here for many years. There are no fences and wild cattle are scattered all over the place. Before a man can lease grazing land he must have some cattle; but the law doesn't say how many or what sex. George will bring his little herd to the country he has leased and every beast on that country that doesn't carry a brand legally belongs to him—except calves still following branded mothers, of course."

"But those cattle will really come from the herds of the men living near George."

"Maybe, but that doesn't alter the law. Anyhow some of the cattle have been bred from cleanskins in their turn."

"A cleanskin is any unbranded beast, isn't it?" asked Joe.

"Yes. Well, besides the cattle on the lease he has taken up, George is entitled to half the unbranded cattle on the boundary—the other neighbour owns the other half; if there is another half!"

"How do you mean 'if there is another half'?"

"Well," I replied, "I know George. Usually he keeps strictly to the letter of the law. That being so he never brands on the boundary; he burns a patch of country in the centre of his run and when there is a good shoot of green grass the cattle come in from the boundary after it; then George brands the lot instead of half."

"The old scoundrel!" exclaimed Joe. "It's quite legal; and everyone does the same in this country."

"Well I wish we had neighbours' cattle on this side of the river; we're mighty short of beef ourselves."

"Yes. I'm afraid that when I was down south on furlough the cattle were neglected and wandered away. It will be years before we build up the herd again. We haven't any beef at all at the moment, have we?"

"Not a skerrick!" Joe said emphatically. "I wish we had. Heaven only knows when we'll taste beef again."

However we were to have beef sooner than we expected. While I was away the next day, George came over and Joe went to meet him.

"Hullo," said Joe. "You've been away a long time, George, but trust you to turn up like a bad penny. Smithy's out. Anything I can do for you?"

"Hullo, Joe. Yes. I knew Smithy was out, the blacks told me; but you'll do. How are you off for beef?"

"Not a skerrick, George; I'm afraid we can't help you this time."

"I don't want beef; I've plenty of my own. I come over to see if you could use a bullock. I've got one there that's just dyin' to be killed. He's good and fat, and a bit of fresh beef will do you good. I heard you was short."

"But you haven't many yourself! You ought to keep them and let them breed up a bit."

"This old bullock I'm talkin' about ain't goin' to be much help in that direction, Joe. No, I can spare him all right."

"But you'll need beef yourself," protested Joe.
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"You can't go giving bullocks away like that."

"Now see here, Joe, there's plenty more bullocks in the bush. Anyways, what's a bullock in this country? There'll be plenty more when you and I am dead, so why worry?"

"Well it's very decent of you," said Joe hastily, as if afraid George might change his mind. "I'll take it if you feel that way about it. Is it a tithe?"

"No, it ain't; it's a bullock. What's a tithe?"

"Christian people," explained Joe, "often give a tenth of their income to the Lord and it's called a tithe."

"I never knew the Lord was short of beef. But I'm killin' this 'ere bullock for you and Smithy. It's a good bullock, but it ain't what did you call it?"

"A tithe. But," Joe insisted, "to give it to those who haven't any beef is just the same as giving to the Lord."

"Joe, you'll come to a bad end. You've been too long in this country without a holiday. You think you're God now! What next? If God wants some beef I've got another bullock where this one came from; but this one is for you and Smithy, like I said."

"Thanks very much, George. All the same I know God will accept it as a tithe to Him and He will reward you."

"You must be pretty thick with Him, Joe, if He's goin' to take it so much to heart just because I reckon you're scraggy lookin' an' in need of a good feed of beef. No, it ain't a tithe."

But Joe's words stuck in George's mind and later he asked me to explain what Joe meant. Somehow the idea pleased the kind-hearted old stockman and he thought it would be a good idea if he put it into practice.

"I get the idea," he announced, "an' I'm quite prepared to give a tenth of all my cattle to anyone who needs beef. Come to think of it, I ain't never given much away in me life. Not that I'm real mean, but I just didn't think of it."

I looked at the old man with wonder. "George," I said, "you've been in this country most of your life. In all that time have you never killed a bullock for the bush blacks — I don't mean your working boys, I mean the hungry old and sick people who hang round in the camp?"

"Why, yes, I often do that, Smithy; I couldn't see nobody go hungry. I guess I kill one or two every month for the old and sick blacks."

"And you say you never give anything away! How many head of cattle have you got now?"

"Let me see. Seventeen cows, one bull and one killer — that's the bullock, of course."

"You can't afford to be generous now," I told him, but he only laughed.

"Ha, ha, plenty more cattle in the bush to be had for the 'akin'. I guess it won't hurt me to give one in ten to the Lord — as Joe calls it. Come to think of it, it don't seem right of Joe to say that. When I think of the dirty old blackfellows I give the last bullock to — well, somehow it doesn't seem right to say they was God."

"God won't be offended. Anything given to those unfortunate people will be taken as given to God, I'm sure of that. And God won't forget you either."

"That's what Joe said. But I don't expect the Lord to take on about it."

George went back to his lease and put in some weeks of good hard work mustering the thick scrub. On his return from the muster Joe and I went down to see him and we were both surprised to notice how his small herd of cattle had increased.

"I say, where on earth did you get these cattle?" asked Joe. "You had less than twenty a few weeks ago and now you must have over a hundred."

"A hundred and thirty-four, to be exact," George replied proudly. "Them cattle of mine is good breeders. Some of the calves was full grown when they was born, as you can see!"

"A hundred and thirty-four! And I suppose you killed a couple for beef?"

"I kill one every week for the stock boys and myself, and I kill one in every ten for the old blacks in the camp. That's me tithe. You see, I've learned the word now, Joe."

"You're a fine man," admitted Joe with admiration. "I am sure God will bless you for your generosity."

"He's done that already, Joe. I was wonderin' how I was goin' to get on about musterin' that boundary near Frank's. There was a lot of cleanskins on that boundary an' I knew Frank would want half. Then the Lord stepped in and sent a storm on my country. All the cattle on the boundary an' some of those over the boundary came right along into my country an' I got 'em all branded afore Frank woke up. Ha, ha, he came along too late, an' the things he said would make your hair stand on end! But I told him it was the Lord's doin', all because of me givin' a tithe. Then I suggested he ought to give a tithe, too. Ha, ha, ha! I hope the Lord didn't hear what Frank had to say!"

Joe looked pained. "But, George, you oughtn't to have branded all the cleanskins; half of them ought to have been Frank's."

"Not on your life! If they had been on the boundary they would have been Frank's; but as
I was sayin', the Lord sent 'em into my country. I wasn't goin' to let the Lord down so I branded 'em quick and lively; there weren't one that got away."

"That's not honest," said Joe.

"Too right it is. Smithy'll tell you that accordin' to the law I was entitled to brand any clean-skins on my own country."

"Legally you were in order," I admitted.

"Of course I were. An' I reckon the Lord approved too, or He wouldn't have let me build up me herd so quick. I wish I had known about tithes afore; I might have been rich by now."

I left George to argue it out with Joe. The old stockman was looking at things from a strange angle, but somehow I believe God understood. Anyhow, George prospered, and all the time he was in the north he gave his tithe — one beast in every ten — to those in need.

We may not agree with the way George worked the scheme out, but there is a fundamental truth in the fact that God does bless those who freely give tithes to those in need. Many a successful business man like Mr. Kraft, the cheese processor, regularly gives a tenth of his income to God's work. We should not give tithes merely in the hope of reward, but God is no man's debtor and these words still stand:

"Will a man rob God: yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:8.

SALE OF WORK: The Sale of Work on 1st May was a great success and once more we have to thank God for a beautiful day; we also thank those who donated gifts for the stalls or who helped in various ways. Following is a list of the stall takings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stall</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boat Rides</td>
<td>10.20</td>
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<td>Children's</td>
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<td>Friends of Marella</td>
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<td>Jewellery</td>
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<td>Plants</td>
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<td>Paulian</td>
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<td>Plain Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ice C.</td>
<td>159.46</td>
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This gives a total of $4050.30, less expenses $528.27, which leaves a net profit of $3522.03. This is $231.40 more than our previous Autumn Sale record and is therefore an all time record for an Autumn Sale.

At the Public Meeting the Bible Reading was taken by Mrs. Norma Warwick, our Secretary for 21 years; and Mrs. K. Langford-Smith opened with prayer. The children, prepared by Mrs. Round, sang very well considering that we have lost so many of the older ones with stronger voices.

THE LATE MRS. JEAN COLEMAN: It was a great shock to all at Marella to learn of the passing of Mrs. Jean Coleman through a tragic car accident. Her husband, Mr. Cyril Coleman, has been a close personal friend of the Sky Pilot for over 40 years. The service was held at Epping Methodist Church and it was amazing the number of friends at the service. It shows the high esteem in which this quiet, unassuming woman was held by her many friends.

In lieu of flowers it was kindly suggested that friends send a donation to Marella Mission Farm and already the sum of 170 dollars has been received and the gifts are still coming in. What a tribute to this Christian friend!

Our deepest sympathy goes to her husband and family and we pray that they will find that "Underneath are the Everlasting Arms."

ANNE DARGIN: Anne left us this month for a position in the country for which she has been waiting over six months. Anne came to us first when she was three years of age. She left for a couple of years but did not get on with her foster parents and so returned to us in 1960; she has been with us ever since. She is now seventeen. We would appreciate your prayers for her future.

RALPH: After a severe ear operation Ralph is back at the Mission Farm and doing well. He has had a long history of ear trouble and we pray that it will soon be a thing of the past.

CONCLUSION: We thank God for many mercies and we look forward to His care of us during the cold, winter months. This is His work and to Him be all the honour and the glory.