

# For the Fruit of all Creation



There was a time, “in the good old days,” when all of society was close to the agricultural world. It was necessary for survival. Everyone in some way would know the ways of the land.

Not so today. It’s hard for me who grew up with farming and ranching to imagine being raised in the middle of a megalopolis and never seeing a field of peanuts or cotton, or row upon row of vegetables, or a calf suckling its mother, or a tractor pulling its plows through the rich soil. Something is lost when reading the words of a hymn such as this one that talks of plowing, sowing, and reaping without ever having spent some time with the land.

It was the second phrase of the second stanza, “in the help we give our neighbor,” that caused me to hurriedly write myself a note: farmers helping each other – Board Church.

In the farming and ranching community surrounding a little Baptist church, which was the center of both religious and social life, lived my grandparents. Since we lived only a few miles away in a very small town with a school system, my life was never far from all the experiences of plowing, sowing, reaping – and raising baby calves and milking the cows and gathering the eggs.

I remember that when anyone in that community needed help with anything, the farmers from miles around were there. Together they built barns, wallpapered houses to help keep the wind from coming through the cracks, harvested the crops and baled the hay. And always there was a feast of home cooked foods for all the workers and all the children.

Thanks be to God the hymn repeats, in full acknowledgement that for all the part we play in the planting, harvesting, and helping our neighbors, it is God who gives the increase, even when our “neighbors” are those left destitute by hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes and terrorism in places we may never see, rather than living on the farm down the road.

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