

## ARTICLE FOR COUNTRY GAZETTE

September 8, 2004

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Some things don't change. As children started school a few days ago, many of them were probably asked to write about what happened for them during the summer. One of the things that happened for me this summer was that my mother came and spent a week with my husband and I. Each night before going to bed she spent time writing memories to share with our family. She told how it was for her to become a farmer's wife--to learn to milk cows, drive a team of horses, plow the fields, care for a garden, make do with scarce resources, raise seven children. There was never a dull moment, that's for sure!

One thing that struck me was that in the midst of difficult times, what kept Mom and Dad going was a belief in their Master Plan. It wasn't exactly clear to me what that was, but it always related to farming, working the soil and bringing forth a harvest of plenty.

As I was growing up I didn't know about the Master Plan. I did know that my parents were able to surmount tremendous problems. Life was chaotic at times, like when Dad cut off his left arm in a sawing accident, or when the feed and seed store business he ran went under and we had to move from our beloved farm to a smaller place, or when my brother was killed in a car accident. Sometimes I felt that the world was crumbling around me. Yet I knew I could look to Mom and Dad for strength and stability. Now I realize that was because of the Master Plan.

I also realize that their Master Plan was bigger than farming. It was undergirded by belief in God's plan and patterned by faith. God works the soil of our lives to bring forth a harvest of the spirit. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. (Gal. 5:22-23).* When we believe in God's plan and seek to follow it, no matter how chaotic life seems, we can feel secure in our knowledge of God's love for us. It is up to us to work out the details. That is why God gives us free will. But we can trust that behind it all is The Master Plan that makes life meaningful and tells us we are each valued in the heart of God. We go to church to remind ourselves of that, to learn from each other how to connect with God's plan through following Jesus, and to give God thanks and praise. Won't you join us in church this week?